

LESLIE W.
BARNARD



THE COUNCIL
OF
SERDICA
343 A. D.

SYNODAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

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*THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS — DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS
STUDIES*

INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH HISTORY AND ARCHIVES — SOFIA

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OF SERDICA
343 A. D.

BY

LESLIE W. BARNARD

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SOFIA — 1983*

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PREFACE

The formal schism between the Eastern and Western Churches which occurred in 1054 had profound consequences in both the religious and political spheres, as is well known. However this division had a long history behind it and the present writer believes that the Council of Serdica, which was held in 343, marked the beginning of this process for there East and West separated by conciliar decision for the first time. Although attempts were made to patch up the differences in 380/381 and later the seeds of division had been so deeply laid that none of these attempts had any lasting success. A fresh study of the Council of Serdica may therefore be of more than purely historical interest.

I have, on the whole, eschewed in this study the use of the term 'Nicene' and 'Arian' and have preferred 'Western' or 'Orthodox' and 'Eastern' in order to emphasise that not all the Eastern bishops involved in the Council of Serdica were supporters of Arianism. The term 'Nicene', as early as 343, also needs qualification as it had not yet become a standard of Orthodoxy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	: Analecta Bollandiana , Brussels.
ACO	:E. Schwartz: Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum , Berlin and Leipzig 1914—40.
Arh	: Arheologiya , Sofia.
Byz	: Byzantion , Brussels.
BZ	: Byzantinische Zeitschrift , Leipzig and Munich.
CC	: Corpus Christianorum , Turnholti.
CH	: Church History , Chicago.
CHL	: Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum , Helsinki
CIL	: Corpus inscriptionum latinarum , Berlin.
CQ	: Classical Quarterly , London and Oxford.
CSCO	: Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium , Louvain.
CSEL	: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum , Leipzig and Vienna.
DL	: Deutsche Literaturzeitung , Leipzig.
DOP	: Dumbarton Oaks Papers , Cambridge, Mass.
DTC	: Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique , Paris.
GCS	: Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller , Berlin.
GNM	: Godishnik na Narodniya Arheologicheski Muzei v Sofiya , Sofia.
Hist.	: Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte , Wiesbaden.
HThR	: Harvard Theological Review , Harvard, Mass.
JAC	: Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum , Münster.
JEA	: Journal of Egyptian Archaeology , Oxford.
JEH	: Journal of Ecclesiastical History , London
JRS	: Journal of Roman Studies , London.
JThS	: Jornal of Theological Studies , Oxford
Lat.	: Latomus: Revue d'Études Latines , Brussels.
LM	: Le Muséon , Louvain.
MThZ	: Münchener theologische Zeitschrift , München.
Monumenta	:C. H. Turner, Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Juris Antiquissima , Oxford (1899—1939).
NPCF	: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church , Oxford.
OCP	: Orientalia Christiana Periodica , Rome.

PG	:Migne, <i>Patrologia series graeca</i> .
PL	:Migne, <i>Patrologia series latina</i> .
PW	:Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, <i>Real Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , Stuttgart.
RAC	: <i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , Stuttgart.
Rev. Bén.	: <i>Revue Bénédictine</i> , Maredsous.
ROC	: <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> , Paris.
RSR	: <i>Recherches de science religieuse</i> , Paris.
RTAM	: <i>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</i> , Louvain.
SP	: <i>Studia Patristica</i> , Berlin.
ST	: <i>Studi e Testi</i> , Rome.
S. Teol.	: <i>Studii teologice</i> , București.
ThReal	: <i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> , Berlin.
ThS	: <i>Theological Studies</i> , Woodstock, U. S. A.
ThZ	: <i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i> , Basel.
TLZ	: <i>Theologisches Literaturzeitung</i> , Leipzig.
ZGA	:E. Schwartz, <i>Zur Geschichte des Athanasius</i> , Berlin (1959).
ZKG	: <i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i> , Stuttgart.
ZNW	: <i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> . Giessen-Berlin.
ZSSR	: <i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte</i> , Weimar.

Our rasher faults

*Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them until we know their grave:*

*Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends, and after weep their dust:
Our old love waking cries to see what's done,
While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

'All's Well That Ends Well'

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

The Christian attitude towards the State, in the pre-Nicene period, had its origin in the teaching of Jesus — 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'. As early as c. A. D. 55 there existed a Christian social code which contained a section on obedience to the State and this was used by SS. Peter and Paul in I Pet. 2, 13—17 and Romans 13, 1—7 and later by the writers of I Tim. 2, 1—3 and Titus 3, 1—3, 8. The dominating theme of this code was subordination to the earthly power. Both I Peter and Romans are emphatic as to the divine origin and sanction of the State and its function of restraining and punishing crime and of encouraging well-doing. Christians owe the civil power an inward loyalty and not only an external submission — and this applies even in times of bad government. S. Clement of Rome (c. A. D. 96) took over and developed this tradition. In spite of the persecution of Nero and the sharp assaults of Domitian Clement can model the discipline of Christians on that of the Roman legions (I Clem. 37, 1—3); the climax of his teaching is however found in the great liturgical section (59, 3-61, 3) which contains a sublime prayer for the State and its rulers:

'Grant that we may be obedient to thy Almighty and glorious name, and to the Rulers and governors upon the earth. Thou, Master, has given the power of sovereignty to them through thy excellent and inexpressible might, that we may know the glory and honour given to them by thee, and be subject to them, in nothing resisting thy will. And to them, Lord, grant health, peace, concord, firmness that they may administer the government which thou has given them without offence. For thou, heavenly Master, King of eternity, has given to the sons of men glory and honour and power over the things which are on the earth; do thou, O Lord, direct their counsels according to that which is good and pleasing before thee, that they may administer with piety in peace and gentleness the power given to them by thee, and may find mercy in thine eyes' (60, 4—61, 2).

Soon after the time of S. Clement Christians began to think of the Emperor as the image of God; so the anonymous writer of the Epistle of Barnabas

(c. A. D. 120) could write, 'Be subject to the Lord and also to your lords as to the image of God, in modesty and fear' (19, 7). S. Irenaeus believed that the Emperor was placed in authority by the divine Logos himself (*Adv. Haer.* 5, 24, 1) and Origen could argue that the State was sustained by the same Logos to whom they commended the Emperor in their prayers (*Contra Celsum* 8, 75). There can be traced through the pre-Nicene period a positive evaluation of the Emperor and the State, in spite of sporadic persecution in some areas, and this is particularly found in Greek Christian writers such as Quadratus, Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Theophilus of Antioch, Origen and later in Eusebius of Caesarea. This positive attitude towards the state in the East in the first three centuries had important consequences once the Emperor had himself become a Christian. It meant that Christians, and especially the bishops, were unprepared for the risks which would be involved once Christianity had become a **religio licita**. It was only too easy at first to accept political support without fully understanding the implications.

The fourth century witnessed a revolution in the history of the Church the results of which continue to perplex us today. Between 313, the date of Constantine's 'conversion', and 380, the date of Theodosius' edict enforcing Catholic Christianity as the religion of the Empire, momentous changes were set in motion. The Church, which was at first under Constantine a religion on an equal footing with pagan cults, became under Theodosius the preferred religion of the Empire and a State-Church. This change of status was only accomplished slowly and only after much experiment. Inextricable confusion marked its progress for Church and State lacked any thought-out policy for the working-out of their relations. W. Schneemelcher, in an important study, has warned that the modern phrase 'the Constantinian age' is of doubtful value for the understanding of the fourth century.¹ There was no such entity as a 'Constantinian State-Church' in the time of Constantine and his immediate successors. Such an entity did not fully materialise until the 380's. In the period with which we are concerned in this book both Church and State were feeling their way as the State's ecclesiastical attitude changed and developed under successive Emperors.

The fourth century was dominated by the Arian controversy which went on for more than sixty years. This not only caused great difficulties for the Emperors, some of whom were uncertain which Church party to support, but also for the relations between the Eastern and Western halves of Christendom. Arianism dealt a moral blow to the Unity of the Church so ardently desired by Constantine and his theological mentor Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. For Eusebius polytheism went with polyarchy and anarchy, monotheism with monarchy. The unity of the Christian faith was a corollary of the unity of the Imperial government — images which were to be used by Athanasius.² The Emperor himself was the image of the Logos, as Christ, the Logos, was the image of the Father. According to Eusebius the Logos was especially active in Constantine whose work was to lead men to a higher knowledge:

'This only begotten Word of God reigns, from ages that had no beginning to infinite and endless ages, the partner of His Father's Kingdom. He (our Emperor), ever his friend, who derives imperial power from above and is made strong by being called after the divine name, has consolidated the empire of the world for many years. Again, the Saviour of all things makes the sky and earth and the Kingdom of heaven worthy of His own Father. Thus his friend brings those whom he governs on earth to the only begotten Word and Saviour and renders them fit subjects of His Kingdom..... He who is the pre-existent Word, the Saviour of all things, imparts to his disciples the seeds of true wisdom and salvation and enlightens them and gives them understanding in the knowledge of His Father's Kingdom. Similarly his friend, acting as interpreter of the Word of God, aims at recalling the whole human race to the knowledge of God, proclaiming with clear voice the laws of truth and godliness to all who dwell on earth. Once more, the universal Saviour opens the heavenly gates of His Father's Kingdom to those whose course is thitherward from this world. And this (our Emperor), emulating His divine example, having purged his earthly Kingdom from every stain of impious error, invites all holy and pious worshippers within the imperial basilicas, earnestly desiring to save with all its crew that mighty vessel of which he is the appointed pilot'.³

However, in contrast to Eusebius' interpretation of the Emperor's role is Constantine's own understanding of his mission. Fourteen texts, which derive from the Emperor between the years 325 and 335, have been studied in detail by J.—M. Sansterre.⁴ Sansterre shows that during this period Constantine did not claim to be the interpreter of the Logos — Christ but rather thought of himself as a fellow servant of the bishops with the task of watching over the decisions of Church Councils.⁵ On the other hand Eusebius portrays the Emperor as above the decisions of Councils, for Constantine, as the interpreter and teacher of God's Will and indwelt by the Logos, is the climax of the historical process whose previous focal points had been Abraham and Christ. There is however no evidence that historically Constantine claimed such a role for himself. Although he had undoubtedly become a Christian of sorts his theology was ambiguous and confused — he used the name 'Christ' for both Father and Son — and retained many pagan elements. He never partook of the central Christian rite of the eucharist.

This is seen in the ambiguous role Constantine envisaged for his new city of Constantinople which was consecrated probably in 328 and to which a substantial population was transferred and a new Senate created. The city was planned as a Christian city from the first; according to Sozomen it was uncontaminated with altars, Greek temples or sacrifices.⁶ However this is historically inaccurate. We know that Constantine allowed two pagans, Sopater and Praetextus, to play prominent roles in the consecration ceremonies and two pagan temples were built in the city before

his death, one dedicated to the Heavenly Twins, and one to the Tyche of the city. Constantine dug into the city's foundations various charms and, for a time, thought of calling the city 'Anthus' or 'flourishing', a Greek form of 'Flora', the secret name used to ensure that the name of Rome should not perish from the world.⁷ Constantine's religious ambiguity is expressed even more clearly in the statue which he set up in the centre of Constantinople which crowned a hundred-foot column of porphyry brought from Heliopolis in Egypt. Under this slab Constantine buried a foundation — offering to bring future good fortune. The body of the statue was an Apollo by Phidias but its head was a portrait of Constantine with a metal halo representing the sun's rays; the inscription on the base referred to the Emperor shining like the sun. Did the statue honour Christ or Apollo or Constantine or the Sun?⁸ Or did Constantine hope to sum up the religion of the world in his own person? We will never know — such is the ambiguity of the statue. This ambiguity is also to be seen on the acropolis of the city where the site of the temple of Aphrodite became the site of the city's principal Church dedicated to Holy Peace and the Blessed Tranquillity of the Emperor. A pagan shrine to peace apparently stood near or within the area dedicated to Aphrodite and pagans could see in this a direct continuity with the past while Christians could see the new world of Christianity superseding the pagan past. But the Emperor's own attitude, although he claimed to be a Christian, is ambiguous. He found it very difficult, almost impossible, to break away from the classical past. This ambiguity also attached itself to the new city which only gradually rose to pre-eminence. It was not a permanent residence of the Emperors nor a patriarchal see until the reign of Theodosius — the Emperor's son Constantius II lived an unsettled life and Valens seems to have avoided the city.

This confusion is further illustrated by the treasures from all over the Roman world which were brought to Constantinople to adorn the new capital. The porphyry column was the largest in the world; statues of the Muses were brought from Mount Helicon in Greece to decorate the new Senate; Zeus, Pallas and Apollo were requisitioned together with many other works of art. Christians saw this as an exhibition of the futility of paganism⁹ but to Constantine himself the treasures brought to the new city were no doubt public proof of his victory. However the fact that he could build a church dedicated to peace and a temple dedicated to the Dioscuroi, the fact that he could patronize the Christian bishops Ossius of Cordova and the two Eusebii on the one side and the pagan Neoplatonist Sopater and the High Priest Praetextus on the other suggests some ambiguity in his thinking. It is not impossible that Constantine believed that he could unite all religions in himself — the spirit of the Supreme God in imperial form.¹⁰ His religious ambiguity goes far to explain his actions in the Arian controversy. Constantine's religion even pursued him beyond death. Eusebius of Caesarea's description of his funeral in 337 implies that it was a purely military affair without any religious rites either pagan or Christian.¹¹ This is very remarkable. Eusebius states that only

after the withdrawal of the Emperor's son, Constantius II, and the military cortege, did the clergy and the faithful come forward to perform the ceremonies of divine worship. State and military funerals were normally religious rites so Eusebius' silence is significant and suggests that there was uncertainty as to the exact nature of the dead Emperor's religion.

Eusebius' idealised portrait of the Christian Emperor and his **imperium** was far removed from historical fact. It may owe something to hellenistic ideas of Kingship which had been invested with the Logos doctrine of the Christian apologists.¹² Constantine represented the divinity on earth and as such was expected to lead men to God. Constantine however had given no credence to such beliefs and, in any case, events proved to be hard taskmasters and soon tempered Eusebius' idealism. As the Church in the fourth century came to have dealings with Emperors who adopted different attitudes to Christianity, and in some cases changed their policies with bewildering rapidity, it had to proceed experimentally. The Eusebian analogy of the Christian Emperor was modified in the light of events and some Christian voices were heard suggesting that a separation of Church and State was necessary if the 'orthodox' faith was to survive.

It has sometimes been stated that Eastern and Western Christendom profoundly differed in their attitudes towards the State in the Fourth century and that these differences reflected contrasting social, cultural, linguistic and geographical factors. H. Berkhof, in an influential work, sought to prove that Arianism had a special tendency towards 'Byzantinism', i.e. an Eastern Church-State ideology of the Eusebian type. In contrast 'orthodoxy', i.e. the group around Athanasius, was pre-disposed towards ideas of a western, theocratic, prophetic — critical attitude towards the State.¹³ This distinction however should not be over-emphasized. Athanasius, for much of his life, accepted the Eusebian view of the Emperor and it is doubtful whether, even under the Emperor Constantius II, he envisaged a total separation of Church and State.¹⁴ John Chrysostom, an Easterner, emphatically addressed the conscience of the Emperor and summoned him to submit to the Word of God.¹⁵ The differences between East and West should not be exaggerated in matters of Church-State relations.¹⁶ I will hope to show later that at the Council of Serdica Arianism **per se** was not widely held by the Easterns and that the West was not as 'orthodox' as has sometimes been thought.¹⁷ The divisions which there hardened into a split, with such momentous consequences, owed as much to jurisdictional as to theological differences. Moreover an almost total inability to understand the position of the other party, as well as unfair characterisations of each others' theological positions, led inevitably to a hardening of attitudes. The Council of Serdica was a decisive moment in the lives of the Eastern and Western churches only insofar as the mental gulf there revealed was never subsequently bridged. In spite of later attempts to heal the breach, Serdica led inexorably to 1054, the date of the final break between Greek Orthodoxy and Rome. Eastern and Western Christendom in 343 divided along geographical and cultural lines never effectively again to reunite. It is our purpose in this

book to examine the fourth century background to this division, the historical situation which led up to the Council, to consider briefly the complicated manoeuvring of its participants and to suggest some reasons why reconciliation, clearly desired at least by some, did not materialise.

The fourth century, during which Church and State painfully worked out their relationship, saw the emergence of the imperial Synodal power. This is of importance for the understanding of the period which led up to Serdica for the authority of Councils, as much as doctrinal issues, was a major bone of contention between the Eastern and Western camps. The Council of Nicaea, convened by Constantine in 325, was the first example of an ecumenical gathering. Its object was to achieve unity and peace in the Church in the face of the disruption caused by Arianism — a laudable object which, in the event, failed to materialise. Although intended to be a world-wide, the Council was composed almost wholly of Eastern bishops. The fact that all but two of those present signed the strongly anti-Arian creed bears witness to the Emperor's influence, although the crucial theological terminology of the creed was interpreted differently by the signatories and was largely to be ignored in ensuing years. The first ecumenical Council, to which we will return later, was a great event in the history of Church and State and raises the interesting question why Constantine, and later his successors, came to adopt this particular method of dealing with Church disputes. Soon after his conversion (or possibly even before) Constantine was drawn into the controversy with Donatism. The North Africa state officials needed to know whether confiscated Church property belonged to Catholics or Donatists and to whom it should be restored in accordance with imperial decrees. In 313 Constantine responded to the schismatics' petition for *iudices* from Gaul by appointing three bishops from Gaul and fifteen from Rome and Italy under the presidency of Miltiades, bishop of Rome, to investigate the matter with the power to summon the bishops from each of the contending parties. This was hardly a synod *per se* but more a court of bishops which decided against the Donatists and in favour of Caecilian, the Catholic bishop of Carthage.¹⁸

As early as 312—313 Constantine, in a letter to Caecilian,¹⁹ had told him to take legal action against Donatists who were seducing the Catholic laity. During the winter of 313—14 the Emperor wrote a letter concerning Donatism to Aelafius, Vicar of Africa.

'Since I am informed that you too are a worshipper of the Highest God, I confess to your Gravity that I consider it not at all right that we should overlook such quarrels and contentions whereby the Highest Deity may perhaps be moved to wrath, not only against the human race, but also against myself, to whose care he has, by his celestial will, committed the Government of all earthly things, and that he may be so far moved as to take some untoward step. For I shall really and fully be able to feel secure

and always to hope for the greatest prosperity and the best life from the very ready kindness of the most mighty God when I see all men venerating the most holy God in the proper cult of the Catholic religion with harmonious brotherhood of worship.'²⁰

The court of 313 had however failed to still the strife in the North African Church and its judgement was challenged as incorrect. Constantine therefore convened a Council of bishops to meet at Arles to determine the case of Caecilian and Donatus and the Emperor allowed the bishops, for the first time, to use the public transport system.²¹ Church Councils had been meeting since the second century but this was the first to be summoned by the Emperor personally who was present at its opening.

In a letter written early in 316 to Domitius Celsus²² Constantine stated that he will hope to visit Africa in order to make clear to Caecilian and his Donatist opponents what kind of worship ought to be offered to the Supreme Deity. By virtue of his established piety and his duty as Emperor it was, he said, his personal duty to suppress errors and follies and to ensure that everyone preserved the true religion. The emphasis in this letter on Constantine's personal responsibility is striking — the Emperor feared that if he allowed religious error to continue God would punish both him and the Empire.²³ Certainly by 316 Constantine had begun to persecute Donatists and to confiscate their church buildings. However, as so often in history, persecution only stiffened resistance and the Emperor realised that religious peace could not be achieved by force. In a letter to the Catholic bishops and laity of Africa written c. 321²⁴ Constantine frankly admitted his failure to secure peace for the Church and advised Catholics to await the workings of the heavenly medicine. However much he might fulminate the Emperor's power was limited in Church matters. He could grant privileges and give money — he could hear petitions and disputes — but, in the last resort, he could not control ecclesiastical controversy.

The Donatist controversy provides the first example of an Emperor confronting religious controversy in the Church and this experience was to be crucial for later developments. Constantine came to realise that the use of force provided no solution for religious conflict and in his later dealings with different Christian factions he tacitly abandoned it. The Emperor's aim came to be the union of State and Church by peaceful means. To effect this the Emperor needed an instrument other than the use of coercive force. The Council of Arles of 314, held at the Emperor's invitation and expense, was an obvious type of court suitable for dealing with religious controversy. The way was thus prepared for the use of imperial synodal power, i.e. Councils summoned by the Emperor to heal religious dissension in the Empire.²⁵ This was Constantine's master stroke and his successors were to follow in his wake. The fourth century was to provide many examples of Councils summoned by Emperors, among which Nicaea 325, Sedica 343 and Constantinople 381, stand out as pre-eminent.

The origin and development of the Arian controversy, which convulsed the Church for more than fifty years, has been the subject of many studies.²⁶ The opposing parties, from the outset, had little understanding of the others' theological and philosophical presuppositions and it was a tragedy that the controversy became entangled with the rivalries of sees and the clash of dominant personalities. Arius' cause, which certainly represented a theological direction, was taken up by the brilliant court-politician, Eusebius of Nicomedia, who organised a campaign on his behalf. Very quickly the Christian East became embroiled with bishops taking different sides or maintaining a mediating position. Constantine was first drawn into the dispute in 324 after his victory over Licinius but at the outset considered the matter a trivial one between Arius and his bishop, Alexander Ossi of Cordova, Constantine's ecclesiastical adviser, was sent by the Emperor to Alexandria to arbitrate — carrying an imperial letter ordering disturbers of the peace to refrain from disputation and to work for unity and peace. This however had little effect as the dispute was no longer a local, Alexandrian affair. Alexander had already written to the Eastern bishops seeking support for his position. Ossi then went to Antioch and early in 325 summoned a Council, which elected Eustathius as its bishop, and sought to stabilize the doctrinal situation. Fifty-nine bishops attended, thirty-one being from provinces not consulted by Alexander. The record of the debates of this Council, at which Ossi presided, have not however survived apart from a fragment preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea in which a bishop from Cilicia states that he believes in three **ousiai**, Father, Son and Man — which went even beyond the Arian position. Ossi apparently drew up the Synodal letter, now preserved only in Syriac,²⁷ which condemned Arius, severely censored Eusebius of Caesarea and set forth an anti-Arian creed consonant with Alexander's views. While the **homoousios** formula does not yet appear in this creed the Arian position is clearly refuted: the Son is begotten from the Father, not made as an offspring, exists everlastingly and did not once not exist. The formula refutes the positions set forward by Arius in his letter to Alexander and the anathemas at the end reject the assertions of the **Thalia** in detail. The importance of this creed is that it was a forerunner of all later conciliar creeds and it was to be confirmed at a great and hieratic Council which would be held at Ancyra. Constantine however was quick to see that this might prejudice the issue and he decided to transfer the Council from Ancyra to Nicaea which was near his imperial residence at Nicomedia. This would enable the Emperor to influence its proceedings and to hold in check the over zealous exponents of a rigid orthodoxy.

The Council of Nicaea, which met in May 325, is reckoned as the first 'ecumenical' Council of the Church because of the size of its company (at least 220 bishops attended) and the range of questions with which it dealt. Imperial transport was provided for the participating bishops and their attendants and this was to be a feature of later Councils, such as

Serdica, when the public transport system was described as 'worn out and is being reduced to nothing'²⁸. Very few came to Nicaea from the Latin West apart from Ossius and two deacons representing Silvester, bishop of Rome. The Eastern representation was however extensive and revealed the widespread nature of the Christian mission at this time. Many confessors were present some still bearing on their bodies the marks of persecution. Again this feature was to recur at Serdica although there the 'confessors' were those who claimed that they had been attacked and ill-treated by fellow-Christians.²⁹

Unfortunately no **Acta** of the Council of Nicaea have survived but some details of the debates can be gleaned from the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea and the historians Socrates and Sozomen, although allowance must be made for the **ex parte** nature of their works. Constantine, in glittering pomp, presided at the solemn opening of the Council on 20 May 325 and urged the assembled bishops to achieve unity and peace in the Church in the light of the troubles caused by Arius and his followers — the **pax Romana** was to find a parallel in the peace of the Church. The Emperor however declared his support for Eusebius of Caesarea and his teaching, against the censure of the Antioch Council. The exact course of the debates is uncertain and, in any case, may have been confused. It seems likely that Arius and his immediate supporters formed one group; another crystallised around Marcellus of Ancyra who was strongly anti-Origenist and anti-Arian and this group may have included Athanasius who attended the Council as deacon to Alexander his bishop. Athanasius and Marcellus were later to diverge as the true impact of the latter's theological position was realised,³⁰ but at this stage, and perhaps for some years after Nicaea, they were closer doctrinally to each other than each was to the Easterns who were led by Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia. The great majority of the Greek bishops attending the Council were however conservative and many simply wished to maintain the Logos-theology of the Church as it had been understood by Origen. This group was not anti-Arian **per se**. After much confusion the Council came out decisively against Arius' theology and a Creed was drawn up which was strongly anti-Arian in its assertion that the Son was consubstantial with the Father (**homousios**). The history of this word need not detain us here³¹ as it was to play little part in subsequent developments up to the time of Serdica. Scriptural terminology would have been preferred by most bishops but this would have failed to exclude Arianism and so this word, which had had a chequered previous history in the Church, was adopted, although whether it was introduced at the behest of Constantine or Ossius cannot now be determined. The result of its adoption, together with the concluding anathemas to the creed, was decisively to exclude the Arian theology.

It is an astonishing fact, in view of the manoeuvrings at the Council and the theological differences between the bishops which these had revealed, that all but two of the bishops signed the creed — and these hapless Libyans were quickly excommunicated. Constantine exercised great pressure to conform and was highly gratified with the result no doubt

believing that the ambiguity of the terms used in the creed, which paralleled the ambiguity of his own religious position, would suffice to bring unity to the Church. But clearly the bishops had understood **homoousios** in different ways; for anti-Arians, such as Athanasius, it meant the personal identity of the Son with the Father, so excluding Arianism; for others it merely carried the idea of a broader identity; still others were confused but signed the creed at the Emperor's behest. Everyone read his own theology into the Creed and there were no 'Nicene' theologians as such.

The Council dealt with several other issues which had caused difficulty such as the Meletian problem, where a compromise was adopted. The date of Easter was to be fixed irrespective of the Jewish date of Nisan 14 — this was however to prove a long-standing problem and it was taken up again at both the Western and Eastern assemblies at Serdica. Twenty canons were issued³² regulating the organisation and discipline of the Church; these confirmed the special position of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch and the position of Jerusalem, the mother Church of Christendom, was recognised without prejudice to the rights of the metropolitan see of Caesarea. Translations from bishoprics were forbidden and bishops were to be consecrated by at least three bishops of a province supported by the written consent of others and the confirmation of the metropolitan. This power structure was based on the Roman provincial system which it resembled closely. The question of a court of appeal from provincial decisions hardly arose in the East at this time where there was no front-ranking see which could claim preeminence. This was very different from the West where the prestige of the see of Rome, and the association of the apostle-martyrs S. S. Peter and Paul with it, simplified the problem. Rome, in fact, had no rival in the West. The question of jurisdiction and fear of the power of a Western 'papacy' was later to loom large at the Council of Serdica.

The Council of Nicaea was of momentous importance for the Church and was a precedent for later Councils, such as Serdica, which sought to bring a measure of unity to divided Christianity. The fact that the Emperor had summoned the Council and its organisation and debates were, to some extent, in his hands was of great future significance. There was no precedent for this development and both Church and State had now to feel their way experimentally. The exact role of the Christian Emperor had not been defined and the future was to see many changes in this role — often dependent on the views of particular Emperors and their susceptibility to influence by court prelates. The Council of Serdica, like Nicaea, was to be called at the behest of Emperors but the Western (Orthodox) bishops were to regard the presence of imperial commissioners with the Eastern bishops as objectionable. East and West in later years were to give different emphases to the Church-State relationship and this difference has remained until recent times. Now in some countries where Orthodoxy is the traditional religion, Church and State are formally separate, each recognising and respecting the autonomy of the other.³³ This development was not envisaged in the fourth century — even under such

pro-Arian Emperors as Constantius II.³⁴

The years which followed the Council of Nicaea until the death of Constantine in 337 present many difficult problems for Church historians. The main facts are however not in dispute. These years saw the emergence of the Eusebian reaction against Nicaea, the readmittance of Arius to communion with the Church, and the falls of Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra. By 337 the Easterns were in the ascendancy in the Church. How did this come about? It is doubtful if we should see these developments as an 'anti-Nicene' reaction in the field of doctrine. All parties, including Arius, accepted the Nicene creed and read their own theology into it and there was no attempt, during this period, to overthrow the creed. Rather the reaction was a political one, with doctrinal undertones, and was mainly the work of Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia and later of Constantinople, who saw that proximity to the court was the key to success. Eusebius realised that there could be no peace in the Church until the antagonists of Arius were eliminated. So the reaction took the form of a frontal attack against persons — although doctrinal questions were not far below the surface. The first question was the readmittance of Arius and his friends to communion which was speedily accomplished, notwithstanding the opposition of Athanasius, possibly at a second sitting of the Council of Nicaea in 327.³⁵ The anti-Arian Eustathius was deposed at an early date and recent study has underlined his importance for doctrinal history as a representative of the Logos-Anthropos Christology.³⁶ The exact course of events surrounding his deposition is difficult to disentangle and this has been dated as early as 326 and as late as 333. W. Schneemelcher, in a perceptive article,³⁷ has argued cogently that two Councils met at Antioch, both of which dealt with the person and behaviour of Eustathius. The first in 326/7 released Eustathius from his office and deposed Asclepas of Gaza at the same time, which would cohere with the statement of the Encyclical issued by the Eastern bishops at Serdica in 343, **qui ante decem et septem annos episcopatus honore discinctus est**,³⁸ i.e. Asclepas was deposed in 326 immediately after the dismissal of Eustathius. It is significant that Eusebius of Nicomedia is not named in the sources as being involved in this incident for as yet he had not returned to his office (327). Neither was Eustathius' so-called insult of Helena, Constantine's mother, yet a factor. Rather Eustathius was deposed at the first Council for 'dogmatic' deficiencies, i.e. for not fitting in with Constantine's policy for peace in the Church. Schneemelcher argues that a second Council of Antioch was held as Eustathius' supporters continued to cause disturbances and at this Council letters from the Emperor were considered concerning Eustathius and Canons drawn up which were later wrongly to be ascribed to the Dedication Council held at Antioch in 341.³⁹ This second Council was held in the spring or early summer of 328 at the same time as Athanasius was being consecrated as bishop of Alexandria. This Council renewed the deposition of Eustathius and suggested Eusebius of Caesarea as the new bishop which he declined on the ground that translations of sees had been forbidden at Nicaea, the

Emperor congratulating him on his refusal. Constantine kept in close touch with the situation at Antioch and the second Council elected Euphronius as bishop in August 328. The Eustathius affair reveals the Emperor's determination to preserve the unity of the Church against the machinations of rival groups.

Eustathius was an important figure doctrinally yet, after his deposition, he was totally ignored. At the 'orthodox' Council of Serdica no attempt was made to rehabilitate him and no defence was made of his doctrinal position. According to the **Eastern Encyclical** Ossius, Constantine's theological adviser, was a 'dear friend' of Eustathius⁴⁰ yet, although he presided at Western Serdica, he made no attempt to defend his friend either at the time of his deposition or at Serdica. Why was this? It is just possible that Eustathius had died some years before Serdica and that his rehabilitation was by then a dead issue. However there is no sure evidence of the date of his death. E. Schwartz argued that he was still alive in the late 340's as a fragment of the **Sermo de Fide** attributed to Athanasius and to be dated c. 345—350 really belongs to the fragments of Eustathius.⁴¹ If this identification were accepted then it would mean that at Serdica he was still under a cloud and the Orthodox assembly were not minded to rehabilitate him. In any event the contrast with the treatment of Athanasius and Marcellus is marked. It may be that his deposition tended to be forgotten once the **cause célèbre** of Athanasius came to the fore.

The case of Athanasius so dominated the Council of Serdica that we must look at the antecedents in some detail. Athanasius became bishop of Alexandria on 8 June 328 and trouble ensued from the outset. His election was disputed — the statement that he was elected by a majority of the Egyptian bishops with the acclamation of the **plebs** cannot be taken at its face value. The tradition of a disputed election, preserved by both orthodox and non-orthodox writers, is confirmed by the fact that Athanasius had to seek confirmation of his election from the Emperor, and had to make an extensive journey through his see after his election in order to strengthen his position.⁴² The Eusebians, who after 327 were led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, regarded Athanasius as a trouble-maker and resolved to destroy him.

However Athanasius proved to be a resolute and intrepid opponent and not until 335 were they able to accomplish his downfall. These seven years saw continued agitation in Egypt stirred up by the Meletians who accused him (not without cause) of using strong arm methods against them. From 331 the Meletians, who were in league with the Eusebians, carried the fight to the imperial court and accused Athanasius of imposing a tribute on the Egyptians, of supporting financially a man suspected of treason, of having broken a chalice with which a certain Ischyrras was celebrating the Eucharist, and finally as having murdered the Meletian bishop Arsenius. Athanasius continually sought to prove his innocence at court and, in this, he was helped by weaknesses in the Meletian accusations. So Ischyrras wrote in support of Athanasius; Arsenius was found alive; the Emperor himself wrote a letter in defence of Athanasius con-

demning the tactics used against him.⁴³

The Eusebians however did not give up and thought up a master-stroke which, in the end, proved to be Athanasius' undoing. In 335 the Emperor would enter on the thirtieth year of his reign and this was to be celebrated by a great festival associated with the dedication of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem which was in the last stages of completion. Eusebius of Nicomedia suggested to Constantine that this would be a good opportunity to decide the case of Athanasius once and for all, i.e. as a *πάρεργον* to the **tricennalia** celebrations, and after this the reconciled bishops could later meet in peace at Jerusalem. The Emperor adopted the suggestion and Tyre was chosen as the place for a new Council which was to meet in the summer of 335. Arius had been readmitted to communion some years before and now at Tyre the enemies of Athanasius assembled en masse hoping finally to get rid of the troublesome bishop who so resolutely opposed Arius.

When the Council of Tyre met in July 335 the scales were heavily weighted against Athanasius. An imperial letter⁴⁴ stated that State resources would ensure that all whose presence would be useful would be required to appear before it. The exact number of bishops who attended is unknown, between one-hundred-and-thirty and one-hundred-and-fifty seems a fair estimate. Athanasius had no doubt as to what lay in store for him for the fifty Egyptian bishops who accompanied him, of whom at least seventeen were former supporters of the Meletians, were refused admission and of the remaining members few were favourable to Athanasius. While the imperial commissioner, Count Dionysius, strove to be fair to both sides the direction of the Council was in the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia and other Arian leaders. It is significant that no major doctrinal issues were at stake at Tyre — the only issue was Athanasius' allegedly violent treatment of the Meletians in Egypt (for which there is some evidence⁴⁵) and the vexed questions of Ischyrras and Arsenius. Athanasius was able to justify himself in regard to Arsenius, who was proved to be still alive. But in the case of Ischyrras he was less fortunate. A heavily loaded commission of enquiry was set up by Count Dionysius composed of six bishops who were sent to the Mareotis and they returned to Tyre armed with a mass of 'evidence' implicating Athanasius. But this evidence had been obtained from one side only and not without threats of force. Athanasius, seeing the way the proceedings were going, fled from Tyre in an open boat with four other Egyptian bishops and made his way to Constantinople where he arrived on 30 October 335. On 6 November he managed to waylay Constantine who apparently was impressed by Athanasius' dominant personality, conviction of the rightness of his cause, as well as by the presence with him of ex-Meletians, such as Agathammon, formerly Meletian bishop of Mareotis. Meanwhile at Tyre Athanasius had been formally deposed⁴⁶ in his absence and forbidden to return to Egypt while John Arcaph, the Meletian leader, was admitted to communion. The Emperor however summoned the Council of Tyre to appear before him⁴⁷ and gave the impression that he wanted to hear no more of the

broken chalice or the murder of Arsenius. The Arian leaders advised the majority of the Council to go home pending the **vicennalia** and instead only six of them would appear before Constantine, among them the two Eusebii and two Pannonian bishops, Ursacius and Valens. Cleverly sensing that the Emperor was weary of the Meletian accusations they changed course and accused Athanasius of attempting to interfere with the corn supply from Egypt to Constantinople. This was a damaging insinuation as bishops were paid administration fees concerning the grain dole (**frumentum**) and behind the accusation may lay jealousy that Athanasius looked after the corn supply of Egypt.⁴⁸ How far the Emperor took this accusation at face value is difficult to discover. But certainly he quickly sent Athanasius into exile in Trèves in Gaul where he remained probably until 338.

Trèves, or Trier, in the Roman frontier region on the banks of the Mosel, boasted in the early-fourth century a new Imperial hall (**Aula Regia**) which was an impressive reminder of the architectural achievements of the classical world. This great structure was a source of influence throughout the early-Middle Ages, became the model of Charlemagne's hall at Aachen and inspired the giant wall arcades found in the Imperial cathedrals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is also possible that the great double Church, erected on the remains of Helena's palace, had already been begun in Constantine's reign. In **Apol. ad. Constantium** 15 Athanasius states that at Trèves he had seen Christians worshipping at the Feasts in a partly completed Church while the building operations were proceeding. However what impression these notable buildings made on Athanasius is unknown — as is the precise reason why Constantine exiled him to Trèves. It may be that the Emperor simply wished to get rid of a cause of disturbance which threatened the Unity of the Church which the Emperor ardently desired as a corollary of the Unity of the Empire. Or it may be that the issue was one of Alexandrian jurisdiction. After Constantine's death his son, Constantine II, stated that Athanasius had been sent to Trèves to keep him out of danger and it is significant that Constantine brought no pressure to bear to fill the vacant Alexandrian see. On his return Athanasius was to find his see unoccupied.

The decisions of the Council of Tyre were a major bone of contention at the Council of Serdica. The verdict of deposition passed on Athanasius carried great weight in the East, even with those conservatives who were not attracted to Arianism, and even though much of his indictment had been proved untenable. The Council, convened at the behest of the Emperor, was not a minor affair and its decisions could not be ignored. All of the major Eastern bishops were present and some from the West. The Eastern bishops, at Serdica, were to claim that the verdict of Councils were irreversible and Athanasius' deposition at Tyre could not be changed.⁴⁹ There could be no right of appeal to a larger Council as this would violate the canon and tradition of the Church. As we will show later the Orthodox assembly at Serdica were distinctly uneasy about the Tyre decisions and realised that the Easterns had precedents for the view that a

Western Council should not overthrow the decision of an Eastern Council. So the Westerns not surprisingly made no reference, in their Encyclical, to the Council of Tyre and based their argument for receiving Athanasius and his followers into communion on the grounds that the charges against him had been proved false. Athanasius himself would have been wise, when he returned to Alexandria in 338, to have convened a Council to re-admit him to his see. This was a fatal error and the fires of conflict between the Eusebians and Athanasius and his supporters in the West continued to blaze. There were moreover profound theological differences between the leaders of the Eusebians and Athanasius and those who had rallied to his cause. So jurisdictional and theological questions were now even more inextricably interwoven.

CHAPTER 2

ROME AND ANTIOCH

The death of Constantine at Nicomedia on 22 May 337 had profound consequences for Church-State relations. As long as the Emperor was alive there was a single fount of authority in the Empire. Soon after his death, on 9 September 337, the Empire was split up into three regions under Constantine's sons and this geographical division accentuated the difference between East and West which had already begun to appear as a result of the Arian controversy. Both bishops and Emperors were now in danger of appealing to sectional interests and so of taking a restricted view of the problems of Church and State.¹ The murder of many of the relations of the new Augusti, soon after Constantine's death, did not help matters. The Augusti followed closely the directions laid down by Constantine in his will: so Constantine II took over the West while Constantius' sphere of responsibility was to be the diocese **Orientis** and the eastern territories including the long-standing Persian war. The youngest Augustus, the youth Constans, was not granted the authority of his brothers and this led inevitably to conflict in the West, in particular between Constans and Constantine II. In 339 Constans voluntarily ceded Constantinople and its surrounds to Constantius as a bribe to buy his support against their elder brother. The reign of Constantine II did not however last long for in 340 he was defeated and killed in battle near Aquileia and so Constans became sole ruler of the West; his freshly acquired power, which he was not slow to exercise, led to a deterioration of character and also had repercussions for Constantius in the East. These political changes were of great significance for the Church and Athanasius, in particular, was quick to exploit them in support of his cause. However he was careful not to become a vassal of the Emperor and for him political action was a consequence of his theological position, and not the other way around.

During his exile in Trèves Athanasius had consolidated his position by gaining the support of certain western bishops and other influential persons. It was thus natural that he should make his way to Rome on his second expulsion from his see. The date when Athanasius left Trèves is the subject of dispute among scholars. E. Schwartz² argued that this was on 17 June 337 as a result of Constantine II's giving him a letter declaring that it was his father's wish that his exile should be ended. This date however leaves less than a month between Constantine's death and his release. H. Nordberg, following C. J. Hefele, argued that it was unlikely that the first measures taken by Constantine II would have been concerned

with Athanasius.³ There were far more pressing problems on hand and, in any event, Constantine's sons were not yet proclaimed as Augusti. It is a significant but often overlooked fact that the letter of Constantine II to the Alexandrian Church annulling Athanasius' exile has no year but only the day and month on which the letter was written.⁴ Schwartz argued that as Constantine II refers to himself as Caesar, not Augustus, the letter must have been written in 337. This however does not follow as other references exist for the use of Caesar as a title for an Augustus. Moreover Theodoret states that Athanasius stayed in Trèves for two years and four months and this would bring his return to Alexandria to the date 23 November 338.⁵ Against Schwartz and, more recently, W. Schneemelcher,⁶ it would seem that a greater weight of probability attaches to 338 as the year of Athanasius' repatriation which was probably the result of the imperial meeting of Constantine II, Constantius and Constans at Viminacium on 12 June 338.⁷ Constantius was at this time deeply involved in the Persian war and could not risk disturbances in Egypt as a result of opposition to Athanasius. However the Eastern Emperor kept Eusebius of Nicomedia as theological adviser, on whom he was deeply dependent, and this was to have significant consequences.

On his way home to Alexandria, which he reached in November 338, Athanasius made a journey through Asia and Syria to consolidate his support, so quietly building up in the East opposition to the Eusebians. At the same time the Eusebians were not inactive and made extensive preparations for a further attack on Athanasius. They made Antioch, where Constantius had his winter quarters, their headquarters although it is uncertain whether they established a permanent council there. It is possible that, in fact, several Councils were held at Antioch. The translation of Eusebius of Nicomedia to the important see of Constantinople on Christmas Eve 338 boded further trouble for Athanasius and early in 339, after the Pistus fiasco, the Eusebians elected the Arian Gregory of Cappadocia as bishop of Alexandria in Athanasius' place. When news of this reached Athanasius a Council of Egyptian bishops was summoned at Alexandria which sanctioned the re-instatement of Athanasius as bishop and issued an Encyclical letter. On 18 March 339 the **Praefectus Aegypti**, Flavius Philagrius, read an imperial decree appointing Gregory as successor to the deposed Athanasius. This measure aroused violent opposition which was suppressed by military force — the fact that Philagrius was an apostate from Christianity is significant — and Athanasius was forced to flee on 19 March. On 22 March Gregory and a military escort arrived in Alexandria. Athanasius had thus been in possession of his see for a mere four months.

Shortly after his flight Athanasius published an Encyclical letter, probably in late-March or early-April 339,⁸ and before his arrival in Italy. He seems to have gone on a tour of his see and may have written this from a hiding place. In it he specifically states that it was the first of a series by which he sought to influence opinion for his cause.⁹ The conclusion of the Encyclical¹⁰ indicates that it was sent to Julius and the

western bishops in the first instance and the result was an invitation to Athanasius to come to Rome.

The Encyclical letter is a significant document which, although ostensibly coming from the Egyptian bishops, is undoubtedly the work of Athanasius himself. It is interesting that there is no mention in it of the Emperor Constantius although Athanasius must have known that his own deposition and Gregory's appointment was carried through with Constantius' connivance. The whole weight of the Encyclical is concentrated on the machinations of the Eusebians rather than on the Emperor. This illustrates the political wisdom of Athanasius who at this stage (339) did not wish to risk any direct clash with an Emperor who could so easily become his determined opponent. Indeed the few references to the Emperors in the Encyclical are respectful in tone.

The letter was delivered to Julius, bishop of Rome, in person by a delegation sent by Athanasius. When the Eusebians, who were already represented in Rome, heard of their coming the leader Macarius hastily left for the East. The other eastern delegates who had been left to defend their position could only request Julius to summon a Council at Rome to which both parties would present their cases. Julius agreed to this and invited Athanasius to come to Rome, where he was already known and his position *vis-à-vis* Arianism understood. He arrived there late in 339. Julius, soon after, sent two delegates to the East to invite a Eusebian delegation to attend the forthcoming Council.¹¹

It is a strange fact that Athanasius, although he spent at least three years in Rome (339—342), never refers to the city or to its vast monuments which inevitably make an indelible impression on the visitor entering the city for the first time. Athanasius' precise route is unknown — he merely says (in *Apol. ad Constantium*⁴), 'When I left Alexandria, I did not go to your brother's headquarters, or to any other persons, but only to Rome; and having laid my case before the Church (for that was my only concern) I spent my time in public worship.' It is likely that he came to Rome by boat via the port of Ostia, which was still of importance in the fourth century, although by then the city itself was beginning to decline from its third-century peak of prosperity when it had a cosmopolitan population of at least fifty thousand and many fine buildings. In Athanasius' day Ostia had not yet reached the demise which S. Augustine so bitterly regretted, although that was not far off. When Athanasius entered Rome for the first time the sight of the impressive and majestic buildings would surely have made a deep impression on him — the Colosseum, the arch of Constantine newly erected in 316, the main forum, the 'domus Augustana' and the 'Domus Flavia', the brickwork Curia (the seat of the Senate) dating from 303, the gigantic architectural achievement of the Pantheon, the numerous public and private libraries, the huge circus of Maxentius which was the meeting place of Roman society (including the Emperor), the machinations of the Eusebians rather than on the Emperor. This illustrates the political wisdom of Athanasius who at this stage (339) did triumph in hydraulics in recorded history), the Aurelian walls and much

else. Yet not a word of these appear in the numerous works of Athanasius apart from a possible reference to the follies of the Romans in **Festal Letter** 13, sent from Rome to his followers in Egypt, at Easter 341: 'Now the unbelievers do not consider that there is a season for feasts, because they spend all their lives in revelling and follies; and the feasts which they keep are an occasion of grief rather than joy.' Perhaps he had in mind the Circus of Maxentius built in 309 A. D. which had a seating capacity (astonishing as it may seem) of about a quarter of a million and which was used on two hundred and forty days of each year for horse-racing and allied sports. Pliny the Younger likewise deplored the Roman abandonment of tragedy for circus sports.

Even the fact that Julius, bishop of Rome during Athanasius' exile, was a notable Church builder receives no mention from Athanasius. We know that Julius built three Churches associated with the catacombs — at S. Felix, S. Valentine on the Via Flaminia and Calepodius, on the Via Aurelia Antica, where Julius was later to be buried. The fact that the **Martyrium** to the apostles SS. Peter and Paul, probably on the Via Appia, was visited c. 340 by Ammonius, a monk who was in exile with Athanasius in Rome, is likewise unmentioned. Athanasius' virtual ignoring of Rome's majestic achievements, as of the activities of Roman Christians of his time, illustrates his total concentration on what was, for him, the major ecclesiastical issue, viz. to gain the support of the Roman Church in his struggle against the Eusebians. This dominated his strategy during his three years in Rome during which he joined in public worship with the Roman Christians. He had apparently little interest in his surroundings — unlike Eusebius of Caesarea who was immensely impressed by Rome's achievements. We can however assume that he made a careful study of the Latin language during this period so as to enable him to negotiate with the Western leaders, although it is equally possible that Athanasius may have already acquired a knowledge of Latin in Egypt where it had become increasingly used in the fourth century.

Athanasius was not the only bishop to arrive in Rome at this time. Early in 340 Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, arrived and was clearly aiming at a theological rehabilitation within the Church. Unlike Athanasius he had not been at Tyre but his arrival in Rome had such profound consequences and so markedly increased the tension between Eastern and Western Christendom that we must mention Marcellus in some detail at this stage. The Easterns were never to forget that the Westerns had received Marcellus into communion at Rome. In their eyes, as we shall see when we examine the Eastern Encyclical issued from Serdica in 343, Marcellus was an arch-heretic and, for them, as significant as Athanasius. By the reception of Marcellus the controversy, which up till then had been mainly, although not wholly, concerned with legal jurisdiction was raised to the theological level. It should not however be concluded that jurisdictional questions were altogether absent even in the case of Marcellus.

Recent study has underlined the importance of Marcellus in the events which led up to the Council of Serdica. 'In the first years after Nicaea

the theological initiative lay with him... even Athanasius came under his influence, for all his reserve'.¹² His work is 'the first highly commendable and effective attempt to refute the co-Lucianists on the basis of extensive interpretation of Scripture'.¹³ Marcellus had taken a strong anti-Arian stand at Nicaea in 325 and this was to stand him in good stead throughout his life, although he was more anti-Arian than pro-Nicene and his appeal was to the **regula fidei** and, on one occasion, to the old Roman Creed, rather than to the Nicene symbol. Only very late in his life, in the **Expositio fidei** of Eugenius, was any appeal made to the Creed of 325.¹⁴ Certainly until the 360's Marcellus was mainly concerned with refuting Arianism.

Marcellus' works seem to have influenced Eustathius of Antioch, already mentioned, who was deposed by a Council or Councils held at Antioch. Marcellus was however altogether a more significant figure and proved difficult for the Easterns to eliminate. Once he had arrived at Rome the West was inexorably involved in the question of the validity of his theological position. The relation between Julius (bishop of Rome from 6 February 337 to 12 April 352) and Marcellus needs further investigation. Julius apparently accepted Marcellus as orthodox and indeed referred both to him and Athanasius as 'our brothers'. In his letter to the Eusebians of 341 Julius wrote:

'With respect to Marcellus, forasmuch as you have charged him also of impiety towards Christ, I am anxious to inform you, that when he was here, he positively declared that what you had written concerning him was not true, but being nevertheless requested by us to give an account of his faith, he answered in his own person with the utmost boldness, so that we recognised that he maintains nothing outside the truth. He made a confession of the same godly doctrines concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as the Catholic Church confesses; and he affirmed that he had not recently adopted them: as indeed our presbyters,¹⁵ who were at a former date present at the Council of Nicaea, testified to his orthodoxy; for he maintained then, as he has done now, his opposition to Arianism (on which points it is right to admonish you, lest any of you admit such heresy, instead of abominating it as alien from sound doctrine). Seeing then that he professed orthodox opinions, and had testimony to his orthodoxy, what, I ask again in his case, ought we to have done, except to receive him as a bishop, as we did, and not reject him from our communion?'.¹⁶

Julius thus accepted Marcellus' orthodoxy on the basis of his anti-Arian stand at Nicaea and the creed which he put before Julius. Marcellus is however considered heretical by Epiphanius, Basil, Chrysostom, Theodoret and the Council of Constantinople of 381 and in the West his teaching was rejected by Hilary of Poitiers and Sulpicius Severus.¹⁷ At the root of this rejection was Marcellus' interpretation of 1 Cor. 15,28 in his work against Asterius which was widely regarded as unorthodox. The explanation of Marcellus' reception at Rome given at the Western Orthodox Council of Serdica was that he had at first advanced certain opinions by

way of enquiry but the Eusebians had represented these as his professed views. The fact that Marcellus was strongly anti-Arian and that he had suffered grievously at the hands of the Eusebians apparently satisfied Julius.

The character of Marcellus is obviously relevant. He was an arch-trimmer adept at facing both ways and ingratiated himself with the bishop of Rome by a skilful deception.¹⁸ The Eusebians had had enough of him before he ever came to Rome. They were piqued at his absence from the Council of Tyre and from the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 335. Marcellus was ordered to render an account of his views which he set forth in a book, but for refusing to burn this book he was condemned at a Council held in Constantinople c. 336 and the Church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, was charged with refuting his theological opinions. It was about four years after his condemnation at Constantinople that Marcellus reached Rome. Epiphanius has preserved a letter from Marcellus to his 'blessed colleague Julius' in which he states:

'Because some of those who previously took an unfavourable view of the orthodoxy of my beliefs (with whom I engaged in debate at the Council of Nicaea) have undertaken to write against me to your Holiness, as if my opinions were still not in keeping with the orthodox teaching of the Church, although they are now anxious to modify their accusation against me, it seemed to me to be necessary, in the light of this, to come to Rome to remind you, so that my critics could be summoned to a meeting with me where I might refute them on both counts, namely that the things they have written against me happen to be quite false, and that even now they still persist in their former error and certain of them make so bold as to take issue with the Churches of God and with us their leaders. However, since they were not willing to meet us, and as you had sent presbyters to them and I had been here in Rome a year and three whole months in connexion with this business, I thought it would be a good idea, now that I am on the verge of leaving the city, to provide you with a written record, written in my own hand with all truth, of my faith, the faith which I was taught and learnt from the Holy Scriptures, so that you might know with what kind of false statements my opponents are trying to obscure the real truth'.¹⁹

There follows an apologia in the form of a detailed statement of his beliefs. In the middle of the document a short creed occurs,²⁰ which is closely related to the creed which can be reconstructed from Rufinus' treatise *Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum*.²¹ Archbishop Ussher long ago identified this as the contemporary creed of the Roman Church and held that its interpolation by Marcellus into his apologia was an ingenious move to prove to Julius his orthodoxy — i.e. Julius' own baptismal creed was **the** perfect expression of his faith.²² The deviations of Marcellus' creed from Rufinus' are of a minor nature; the word **Father** is omitted in the first paragraph and **life everlasting** is added after the clause **resurrection**

of the flesh.

F. J. Badcock²³ argued, against Ussher, that Marcellus is simply quoting the creed of his own Church of Ancyra and the Roman creed was not in his mind at all. This is shown by his explicit statements, 'I thought it would be a good idea... to provide you with a written record, written in my own hand with all truth, of my faith, the faith which I was taught and learnt from the Holy Scriptures'... 'This is the faith which I received from Holy Scripture, which I was taught by my parents in religion, and which I preach in the Church of God'.²⁴ J. N. D. Kelly²⁵ however has shown that Badcock's argument does not carry weight as Marcellus' creed does not conform to any known type of creed from Asia Minor. Moreover, Marcellus' references to 'my faith', 'the faith which I was taught'... 'the faith which I received, which I was taught' refer, not to his credal formula, but to his theological position in the wider sense. Kelly points out that his apologia, which is lengthy and skilful taking up some forty-five lines in Holl's **Berlin Edition**, comprises a reply to his Arian detractors and a detailed exposition of his own attitude. The reference to Marcellus' faith, at the beginning of the letter, must be taken as covering the whole of the two paragraphs in which he develops his own theological views. The whole is packed with citations from Scripture — this bearing out Marcellus' argument that his teaching had a biblical basis. It is difficult to restrict 'my faith' and 'this faith' to the single small item of the creed which he reproduces. Marcellus was referring to the general content of his beliefs concerning the Father and the Son. What then are we to make of Marcellus' creed?

If we agree that it was the contemporary Roman baptismal creed which Marcellus presented to Julius we are faced with the pertinent question why the latter did not apparently recognise the adoption of his own formula. Moreover, why did not Athanasius characterize its origin? We will never know. But apparently its production sufficed to obtain Julius' good will. Marcellus even had the audacity to ask Julius to enclose copies of it to those bishops with whom he was corresponding in order that any who did not know Marcellus might be disabused of wrong ideas about him. It is an odd fact that Marcellus' creed was never made public or appealed to again by him — not even at the Council of Serdica. But apparently it satisfied Julius at the time although he was not prepared to do more than admit Marcellus to communion — there is no mention of restoring him to his see. Marcellus, an important figure in the Arian controversy, was, in fact, an arch trimmer. Heir to the older Antiochene-Jewish tradition he was quite willing to be a Western to the Westerns and an Eastern to the Easterns when it suited his purpose. It would seem that he duped Julius. The fact that Julius had gone a certain way and re-admitted him to communion, Marcellus never forgot. Throughout his life he traded on it: *se communione Julii et Athanasii, Romanae et Alexandrinae urbis pontificum, esse munitum*.²⁶

The Council convened by Julius to consider the arguments of the Eusebians and Athanasius and his friends convened in Rome early in

341.²⁷ Athanasius had thus been in Rome for more than a year preparing the ground and during this time engaged in Christian worship and took part in the Paschal liturgy. Marcellus and other anti-Eusebians were also there. However the Eusebians at first did not answer Julius' invitation to come to Rome and when they finally did it was to reject the proposal of a Council and to threaten to break communion with Julius if he continued to recognize Athanasius as bishop of Alexandria.²⁸ The Roman bishop decided to go ahead without the Eusebians and early in 341 the delegates met in the parish church of S. Vitus who had attended the Council of Nicaea as a delegate of Silvester, bishop of Rome. According to Athanasius more than fifty bishops attended the Council and these came from Thrace, Coele-Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine and presbyters from Alexandria. In addition to Athanasius and Marcellus Julius was present with bishops from around Rome and throughout Italy.²⁹ It is however significant that only fifty or so bishops could be mustered, many western provinces being unrepresented and the Eastern Encyclical from Serdica indicates that not all Italian bishops were behind Julius.³⁰ Ossius, who was to play a major role at Serdica, had not yet re-emerged as an active figure and did not take part. The Council was thus heavily weighted in support of Athanasius and his fellows and the result a foregone conclusion. Its proceedings are in fact only known from the Letter of Julius to the Eusebians which shows that the cases of Athanasius and Marcellus received detailed treatment. Athanasius refuted point by point the acts of the Council of Tyre and other documents which the Eusebian delegates had brought to Julius and rehearsed the injustice allegedly endured by him and his followers. The Council vindicated Athanasius and condemned the appointment of Gregory of Cappadocia as his successor. Marcellus was also admitted to communion. Nothing is said about other deposed prelates although it is possible that similar verdicts may have been given. If the *acta* of the Council of Rome had survived *in toto* it is likely that the influence of the personalities of Athanasius and Marcellus would be even more clearly visible.

The decisions of the Council were sent to the Eusebians by Julius in an Encyclical letter which is a studied example of ecclesiastical diplomacy and which has received much attention from scholars.³¹ Julius deals not only with the immediate cases of Athanasius and Marcellus but also with the authority of Councils, the status of bishops and the significance of custom as a court of appeal. Yet Julius' argument assumes that the verdict of one Council may be subsequently revised or cancelled by another and this was emphatically denied by the Easterns and re-iterated in the Encyclical of the Eastern bishops who were to assemble at Serdica. Julius insists that the Roman see has a right to be consulted on disputed matters, and in particular in cases concerning the see of Alexandria. He has a sense of injury because the co-operation of the whole Church has not been invited in the cases of Athanasius and Marcellus — an unrealistic view in the light of the fact that so few bishops, even from the West, had so recently attended the Council in Rome. Julius is not so much asserting

a Roman primacy as stating that all bishops ought to be involved in condemning brother members of the episcopate. Behind his emphasis on the need for the co-operation of all bishops we can discern his fear of an 'eastern' papacy based on the sees of Antioch or Constantinople and undergirded by the Eastern Emperor.³² The seed for this development had been sown by Eusebius of Caesarea in his eulogy of Constantine and it was to come to final fruition in the reign of Justinian.

It is significant that Julius did not attend the Council of Serdica some two years after the Council of Rome, and at Serdica there appears to have been a reluctance, on the part of the Orthodox assembly, to refer to the decisions of the Council of Rome. It may be that the Westerns did not wish to give the impression that they were merely acting as a rubber stamp to decisions taken earlier and perhaps they were conscious that Julius' judgment was not universally accepted in the West. The Eastern Encyclical from Serdica is equally reticent about Julius, which is surprising, although eastern fear of a western 'papacy' is certainly evident in it. It was the fate of Julius to be by-passed by events — although early in 341 he was a significant figure in the struggle between East and West.

In the summer of 341 ninety-seven bishops gathered in Antioch to celebrate the dedication of the Golden Church which had been completed by the Emperor and while there they held a Council known as **In Encaeniis**.³³ The Emperor Constantius was present at certain sessions although it appears he did not exercise pressure on the assembled bishops — there are no complaints of undue Court influence. No western representatives attended and the Council was therefore strictly an Eastern affair although it was certainly not a small provincial gathering as most of the leading eastern bishops were present. The questions with which the Council dealt were of great importance for the future of the Church. Yet it is remarkable that little information about its proceedings has survived — perhaps because its theological pronouncements were made obsolete by later developments. Athanasius, with hindsight, omitted all mention of this Council when compiling his **Apologia c. Arianos**.

One of the first acts of **In Encaeniis** was to promulgate a solemn statement that the Easterns were not Arians and to state that they had only re-admitted Arius to communion after vigorously testing his orthodoxy. The main concern of the Council was however to reply to Julius' letter sent immediately after the Council of Rome. The question of doctrine was raised and the bishops felt constrained to issue three new creeds to clarify their position. These were not intended to supersede the Nicene symbol but were more theological declarations of faith than confessions *per se*. The first creed is quite unexceptional and is possibly, though not certainly, of a modified baptismal type.³⁴ J. N. D. Kelly³⁵ points out that the Creed excludes Arianism proper by affirming that the only-begotten Son before all ages subsisted and co-existed with the Father. At the same time the Eastern bishops took the opportunity to add a clause to the structure of the Creed directed against Marcellus' teaching ('and abides King and God for the ages'). Kelly correctly states that the first Dedication

Creed excludes both the characteristic teaching of Arius and Marcellus and thus chooses a conservative middle way.

The second Creed,³⁶ which the Council ratified in its own name, is a long rambling document strongly anti-Sabellian and anti-Marcellian. An ancient tradition, which is difficult to evaluate, linked the Creed with Lucian of Antioch;³⁷ traditional credal clauses are heavily expanded with biblical phraseology and scriptural authority is somewhat surprisingly claimed for the creed. The document excludes Arianism in its main Christological section and this is re-inforced in the concluding anathemas:

'Holding then this faith, and holding it from the beginning to the end, in the sight of God and of Christ we anathematize every heretical heterodoxy. And if anyone teaches contrary to the sound and right faith of the Scriptures, that time or season or age either is or has been before the generation of the Son, let him be anathema. Or if anyone says that the Son is a creature as one of the creatures, or an offspring as one of the offsprings, or a work as one of the works, and not as the divine Scriptures have handed down each of the aforesaid articles, or if he teaches or preaches besides what we have received, let him be anathema. For all that has been handed down in the divine Scriptures, whether by prophets or apostles, we do truly and reverently believe and follow'.

The anti-Sabellian note is revealed in the exegesis of Matthew 28, 19 where the Creed asserts three hypostases, each possessing its own subsistence, power and glory bound together by will 'of a Father who is truly Father, and a Son who is truly Son, and of the Holy Spirit who is truly Holy Spirit, the names not being given instant meaning or effect, but denoting accurately the peculiar subsistence, rank and glory of each that is named, so that they are three in subsistence and one in agreement'.

The so-called 'third' Dedication Creed was the work of Theophronius, bishop of Tyana, otherwise unknown, which he may have delivered to the assembled bishops to clear himself of suspected heresy — although there are insoluble problems, on present knowledge, in connexion with the incident. Once again this creed is anti-Sabellian and anti-Marcellian in character. It has however little claim to be regarded as an official creed of the Council.

The most significant of the Dedication Creeds is the fourth³⁸ which is traditionally associated with the Council although it was drawn up at a slightly later date, and properly belongs to the events leading up to the Council of Serdica. We will have occasion to discuss this in detail in a later chapter. This creed is again based on the older baptismal form but is highly conciliatory in emphasis, strongly condemning both Arianism and Marcellianism. The final clause rejects any kind of Arian belief:

'But those who say that the Son is from nothing, or is from another hypostasis and is not from God, and that there was a time when He was not, the Catholic Church regards as alien'.

The introduction of *Xpóvoς*, for the first time, is significant and makes more explicit the condemnation of Arianism — indeed, it comes close to

the Nicene anathema. The anti-Marcellus clause is also emphatic ('Whose reign is indissoluble and abides for endless ages; for He will be sitting on the Father's right hand not only in this age but also in the coming one'). The fourth Creed differs substantially from the second creed of the Council as its object was apparently to make a final conciliatory gesture towards the West. This is shown by the fact that early in 342 the Eastern bishops despatched four of their members, Narcissus, Maris, Theodorus and Mark to Gaul to present the Creed to the Emperor Constans and the Western bishops. Socrates³⁹ and Sozomen⁴⁰ state that the initiative for this meeting came from Constans who requested his brother Constantius to send bishops to explain why edicts of deposition had been passed on Athanasius and Marcellus. Athanasius however shows no knowledge of such a request⁴¹ and the refusal of the bishop of Trèves, Maximin, to receive them⁴² also suggests that Constans is unlikely to have invited them officially. It seems more likely that the mission of the four bishops was unsolicited and represented an attempt to find common ground with the West. By 342 Constans, the champion of the Nicene symbol, had increased his political power now that his brother Constantine II was dead; moreover Constantius was still tied up with the Persian threat and in no position to challenge his brother. The two Eusebii were dead (Caesarea c. 340 and Nicomedia/Constantinople shortly after the Dedication Council) and Arian leadership was on the wane. E. Schwartz,⁴³ followed by V. C. de Clercq⁴⁴ and J. N. D. Kelly,⁴⁵ surmise that the delegation of Eastern bishops to Constans was a manoeuvre to prevent Constans calling an ecumenical Council which the Easterns feared would go against them. This is not quite certain. According to Socrates the Western bishops asserted that the Nicene Creed was enough and that they would waste no time on anything which went beyond it — although it was never the intention of the Easterns to replace the **Niceanum**. It would appear that Constans did in fact receive the envoys but no further progress was made in reconciling the parties. This can be understood from the fact that Athanasius had consolidated his position in Trèves, where he had won support for his views during his first exile, and no doubt branded the embassy as an Arian manoeuvre. The Creed carried by the four bishops was however emphatically anti-Arian and quite in line with the Nicene symbol — the omission of **homoousios** was not significant or provocative in the 340's — Athanasius never refers to it during this period.

The four creeds traditionally associated with the Dedication Synod of 341 were not attempts to supersede the Nicene Creed. There is no evidence that the Eastern bishops either repudiated or wished to repudiate Nicaea — indeed all the Creeds, in varying degrees, are anti-Arian, although the anti-Arian stance is not polarised. There can however be little doubt that Marcellus was a major bone of contention between East and West. It is a remarkable fact that all the Creeds associated with the Dedication Council are strongly anti-Marcellian and none more than the Fourth Creed which, in other respects, is the most conciliatory. The fact that these Eastern sources so emphatically reject the characteristic positions

of Marcellus, while rarely mentioning Athanasius, suggests that Marcellus and his theology were of far greater significance in the period 325-343 than has usually been thought. It is possible that in the early part of this period Athanasius came under his influence, although later he was to have severe reservations about his colleague. Earlier Athanasius and Marcellus would appear to have had more in common with each other than with the Eusebians of the East.

Marcellus theologically represented the continuing tradition of Jewish-Christianity, i.e. — a strong monotheistic emphasis on the Oneness of God, while the Logos was interpreted as the Word of the Lord, the **dabar Yahweh**, rather than in personal terms.⁴⁶ Yet as the Monad God was never without his Word which expands in activity rather than essence. Marcellus is strongly anti-Origenist and anti-Arian and defends the **homoousios** which for him meant 'identity'. His opposition to the words **ousia** and **hypostasis** came from his genuine fear of ditheism and tritheism, a fear shared by Athanasius up to the time of Serdica. The Easterns, and particularly Eusebius of Caesarea, saw in Marcellus the face of a new Sabellius and it was undoubtedly fear of Sabellianism which lay at the root of Eastern objection to his teaching. This was a misunderstanding of Marcellus' position although it must be admitted that Marcellus did little to clarify his views *vis-à-vis* the East. At the Council of Serdica Marcellus was to remain a bone of contention.

By mid-341 the die had been cast for a major conflict between East and West. The surviving documents are heavily weighted in favour of the West and bear the stamp of Athanasius' masterful influence such that it is difficult to gain an objective view of the issues at stake. The jurisdictional issue of the re-instatement of Athanasius and Marcellus had now widened into a theological struggle of the first magnitude. Athanasius indiscriminately branded all the Easterns as Arians, which they were certainly not, while the Easterns, many of whom were conservatives with a theology rooted in pre-Nicene thought, could only see the features of Sabellius in the teaching of Marcellus. Moreover the fact that the Eastern Emperor, Constantius, was involved in support for the Eastern position led to the Western fear that an Eastern 'papacy', protected by the State, was in the making. The Easterns likewise suspected the power of Rome and this led to their assertion of the irreversibility of the decisions of provincial Councils, in practice those that suited them, such as that of Tyre in 335.⁴⁷ This was in blatant conflict with much earlier practice concerning provincial Councils both in the East and West. Much was to be made of the 'irreversibility' of Conciliar decisions later. By late-341 jurisdictional and theological issues were inextricably interwoven with wider questions concerning the power structure of the Church. A new attempt to break this deadlock was now to be made.

CHAPTER 3

PREPARATIONS FOR SERDICA

In spite of the rebuff administered to the Eastern delegation early in 342 the Westerns did not remain inactive. The idea of a General Council to settle matters of faith and the jurisdictional questions surrounding Athanasius and the other bishops still had attractions. The Westerns had no love for imperial interventions in questions of faith yet they realised that only an imperial order would bring the Easterns to heel; they saw that Constantius was unlikely to order a General Council on his own account but would need to be pressed into this. The character and theological opinions of Constantius are of some interest in this connexion. Through his support for Arianism, which continued throughout his life, Constantius has had a bad press from Church historians. He was however personally moral and religious to the point of superstition. According to Theodoret¹ before fighting the usurper Magnentius Constantius ordered his whole army to receive the baptismal robe. Any soldiers who declined baptism were dismissed, for the Emperor refused to fight with any who refused the name of Christian. While it is unlikely that the speech as a whole is genuine, nevertheless a broadly Christian piety is evident in it. Constantius' predilection for Arianism may owe something to his philosophy of kingship to which the views of Themistius may have contributed.² Ammianus Marcellinus' portrait of Constantius would appear to support this. Ammianus describes Constantius approaching Rome for the **vicennalia** as though imitating the impassible Ruler of heaven, 'turning his eyes neither to the right nor to the left, as if he had been a statue....'³ The same historian says that Constantius spoke of his own **aeternitas** and in writing letters in his own hand would style himself lord of the whole world. His imperial successes were so to strengthen his confidence in the divine rightness of his cause that he thought of himself as raised to an equality with heaven. In his harangue before the soldiers on the Persian front Constantius confidently appealed to the present help of the most high deity and it is possible that Arianism commended itself to him as the most rational form of Christian monotheism.⁴ In a hierarchical society Arianism had its attractions and it is sometimes forgotten that Constantius did not know which version of the Christian faith would eventually be accepted as true. Events, such as the victory of the Nicene faith, which to us are now long in the past were to Constantius in the future.

However Ammianus Marcellinus shows another side of Constantius' character which is all the more valuable as he himself was not involved

in the religious controversies of the age. Ammianus⁵ says that Constantius confounded by the dotage of superstition the Christian religion which, in itself, is plain and simple. Instead of reconciling parties by the use of imperial authority he propagated, by verbal disputes, the theological differences which his vain curiosity seized on. The highways were covered with troops of bishops, galloping from every side to Church Councils, and while they laboured to bring the whole sect to their own point of view the public post was almost ruined by their hasty and repeated journeys. While we must allow for some exaggeration Ammianus' testimony, on the whole, rings true. Constantius, unlike his father, was not primarily concerned with the Unity and peace of the Church but with propagating that version of the faith to which he was attracted. Eunuchs, slaves and female 'attendants' to the guards played on his susceptibilities. We would however be unwise to portray Constantius merely as a tool in the hands of the Eastern pro-Arian leadership. He had a mind of his own and knew what he wanted.

As early as 342 Constantius was in no position to call a General Council, even if he had so wished, and the Western bishops during that year asked Constans to exert pressure on his brother to convene with him a Council. Who made the request is uncertain as the sources are confused. Athanasius states in one context, that 'certain' bishops requested the Emperor to write to his brother⁶ although in his **Historia Arianorum** he states that a report of the proceedings of the Council of Rome of early 341 and an account of the persecutions in the Church of Alexandria and throughout the East became known to Constans who then wrote to Constantius with the result that both Emperors determined that a Council should be held.⁷ On the other hand the Encyclical drawn up by the Eastern bishops at Serdica states that Athanasius, Julius, Maximin, Ossius and several others effected the meeting at Serdica 'in accordance with the kindness of the Emperor'.⁸ Socrates and Sozomen ascribe the initiative to Athanasius, Paul of Constantinople and their party while Theodoret mentions Athanasius alone.⁹ These diverse notices make it difficult to discover who first approached Constans. Athanasius, in his **Apol. ad Constantium** written c. 357, states that he took no direct part but that Constans commanded him to meet him at Milan because certain other bishops had requested Constans to write to Constantius desiring that a Council should be held.¹⁰ Athanasius accordingly went to Milan to meet Constans. Although the **Apol. ad Constantium** is an *ex parte* document there is no reason to doubt Athanasius' evidence on this point.⁹ If he had himself approached Constans surely he would not have been ignorant as to why Constans had summoned him to Milan. It would seem likely that, in fact, Julius took the initiative in this matter by sending to Constans a report on the Council of Rome and other reports of the persecution of pro-Nicene bishops in the East.¹¹ In view of the prominence of the Spanish bishop, Ossius of Cordova, at the Council of Serdica, where he presided at the sessions of the Western assembly and proposed many of the Canons; it would seem likely that he too was involved as the Eastern Encyclical from Serdica asserts.¹²

This brings us to the problem of Ossius' sudden reappearance on the ecclesiastical scene after a silence of some sixteen or seventeen years. Ossius had been present at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and in all probability presided as his name appears first in the list of signatories of Nicene bishops recorded by the early Church historians and in the canonical collections;¹³ the fact that Ossius was first to sign the Nicene Creed again points to his presidency of the Council. As we will see he also presided at the Western Orthodox Council of Serdica in 343. What then happened to Ossius between 325 and the preparations for Serdica in 342? Here was no unknown bishop but a major figure in the Church who had been Constantine's ecclesiastical adviser and whom the Emperor had sent on a mission to Alexandria in 324 to seek to heal the breach between Alexander of Alexandria and Arius. After Nicaea was Ossius suddenly dropped by Constantine and forced to retire to his native Spain? It is certainly strange that there is no mention in Western sources of his making any attempt to oppose the Eusebians in the years 328—337. How are we to account for his sudden reappearance in 342?

There are two minor pieces of evidence to be considered. Zosimus, in his *Historia Nova*,¹⁴ records the murder by Constantine of his wife Fausta and son Crispus in the summer of 326. In the course of his account Zosimus states: 'A certain Egyptian, who had come to Rome from Spain and had become familiar with the court ladies, then assured Constantine that Christian doctrine takes away all guilt, and that it promises to all evildoers who become adepts, immediate release from all sins.' This looks like a garbled reference to Ossius who came to the court from Spain and had visited Egypt to mediate in the Arian troubles. Ossius was thus still at the imperial court with Constantine in Rome in 326. There is also another small piece of evidence which has often been overlooked. In the Eastern Encyclical from Serdica there is a section dealing with Ossius:¹⁵

sed Ossium propter supradictam causam et propter beatissimae memoriae Marcum, cui graues semper iniurias irrogauit, sed et quod malos omnes pro criminibus suis digne damnatos totis uiribus defendebat et quod conuixerit in Oriente cum sceleratis ac perditis. turpiter namque Paulino quondam episcopo Daciae indiuiduus amicus fuit, homini, qui primo maleficus fuerit accusatus et de ecclesia pulsus usque in hodiernum diem in apostasia permanens cum concubinis publice et meretricibus fornicetur. cuius maleficiorum libros Machedonius episcopus atque confessor a Mobso combussit. sed (et) Eustasio et Quimatio adhaerebat pessime et carus fuit. de quorum uita infami ac turpi dicendum nihil est; exitus enim illorum eos omnibus declarauit. his itaque ac talibus iunctus ab inito Ossius, sceleratos semper fouens, contra ecclesiam ueniebat et inimicis dei semper ferebat auxilium.

What are we to make of **et quod conuixerit in Oriente turpiter namque Paulino quondam episcopo Daciae indiuiduus amicus fuit**? Schwartz emended **Daciae** to **Adanae**¹⁶ in which case Ossius is condemned for staying in the East with the bishop of Adana, a town in the province of Cilicia, who,

according to the Easterns, was an immoral sorcerer. However it is significant that Ossius is not himself accused of sorcery but of consorting with evil men which suggests that the Easterns had nothing against his character. If this is a historical notice — and presumably the Easterns had concrete evidence for their own territories — when was Ossius staying in the East? As he is linked in this passage with Eustathius, bishop of Antioch and Cymatius, bishop of Paltus on the Syrian coast, this sojourn in the east must have been shortly after 325 as both Eustathius and Cymatius were deposed as a result of, or just before, the so-called anti-Nicene reaction led, after 327, by Eusebius of Nicomedia. It is however odd that Ossius is not said himself to have actively opposed the Eusebians. G. S. M. Walker¹⁷ suggested that doctrinally Ossius stood close to Marcellus beyond the extreme right wing of orthodoxy, and that Ossius' ultimate fall, in 357, was nothing worse than a repudiation of his earlier theological mistakes. Against this is however the significant fact that the Eastern Encyclical of Serdica, while arguing strongly against Marcellus' theology, never associates Ossius with Marcellus' beliefs, beyond stating that Ossius, with others, had supported the reception of Marcellus into communion with the Western Church. If Ossius had been an outright Marcellian we would have expected much to have been made of this by the Easterns. Similarly we must dismiss Walker's theory that the vigour of the anti-Nicene reaction after 327 is to be explained as a reaction against Ossius' beliefs.

These two small pieces of evidence do not go far to explain why Ossius 'disappeared' between 325 and 342. One explanation is that he was no longer a member of the Emperor's court and therefore little concerned with the Eastern reaction to Nicaea. Against this however is his friendship with Eastern bishops deposed by the Eusebians, which suggests a continuing interest in Eastern affairs. It is of course possible that he returned to Spain for a long period from a sense of duty to his own Church and city which may have been without effective leadership. There is certainly no historical evidence for a rupture of relations between Constantine and Ossius nor why Constans should have recalled him, if he did. A further puzzle is that there are no historical notices of Ossius' having been in Spain during the period 326—342. However Spain was relatively remote in the fourth century and even before then literary references to Christianity and Christian inscriptions are very sparse. The Canons of Elvira (306) show that Christianity was beginning to penetrate the educated classes and, in the time of Constantine, there is one reference to a poet of senatorial rank, C. Vettius Aquilinus Juvenius, who was a Christian presbyter and wrote an epic on the Gospels in the style of Vergil.¹⁸ But there are no other notices which could illuminate Ossius' Spain between Nicaea and Serdica. The Spanish Church was strongly latinized with little trace of the influence of Greek Christianity and the Arian controversy hardly pierced its lethargy or tranquil obscurity.¹⁹ It may be doubted if Ossius himself really understood the purport of Eastern theology.

We can only surmise the reasons which may have led Ossius, now

at least eighty years of age, to reappear on the Christian world-scene. The fact that Athanasius was an exile in Rome may have brought to his notice the fact that the Nicene faith, as understood by Athanasius and himself, was in danger. It is possible, although it cannot be proved, that Ossius went to see Constans in Trèves as the Western Emperor was then directing the war in Gaul — this would have been before Athanasius saw Constans in Milan which cannot have been earlier than April 342 and may have been several months later.²⁰ During the winter of 342/3 Constans was directing military operations in Brittany but he had certainly returned to Trèves by the early summer of 343.²¹ Athanasius in his *Apol. ad Constantium* 4. says that he was sent for by Constans to come from Milan, where he had stayed, to Gaul 'for the Father Ossius was going thither that we might travel from hence to Serdica' which suggests that Ossius was already party to the proposal to convene a General Council. The formal convocation of the Council was however entirely the work of the two Emperors as is stated by both assemblies at Serdica, by Athanasius, Ossius, Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret²² and as was stated by Constans himself to Athanasius at Milan. The acquiescence of Constantius in Constans' proposal is not surprising in view of the political situation and the former's involvement in the Persian war. At this stage Constantius had little time to argue otherwise. Thus the idea of a General Council was that of the Western bishops who gained the approval of Constans for it — although its convocation was solely the work of the Emperors. However the Western bishops were determined that the State should not be directly involved in the proceedings (unlike at Nicaea) and it is significant that no representatives of the Emperors attended the Orthodox assembly at Serdica. It was however otherwise with the Easterns who brought with them imperial counts and who came to lodge in the imperial residence in Serdica.

The choice of Serdica as a meeting place for the Council was dictated by practical considerations. This Dacian city, in the province of Illyricum, occupied a central position and was very near to the border of the Eastern Empire just inside the territory of Constans. It is easy to see why the Slavs called the city Sredets, i.e. the 'Centre', as for centuries it had been, what it was in antiquity, an important junction connecting the East with the West, Poland, Russia and Rumania with the Aegean and Adriatic coast. Sofia is one of the most ancient cities in Europe at least five thousand years old — even in the centre of the city under the present 9 September Square ruins going back to c. three thousand B. C. have been uncovered by archaeologists. The Romans, who conquered the Balkan peninsula in 46 A. D., quickly realised the importance of Sofia and it was given the status of an autonomous municipality in Trajan's reign (96—117). The city was then named Ulpia Serdica in honour of Trajan one of whose names was Ulpus. Serdica developed rapidly and gained significant economic strength being linked with all parts of the Roman Empire. The main Roman road which linked Central Europe with Asia through Singidunum (Belgrade), Naissus (Niš), Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and Byzantium (Constantinople) also ran through Serdica. In the reign of

Marcus Aurelius (161—180) the town was surrounded by a wall 12 m. high, access to the city being gained through four main gates. The forum, which was rectangular in shape, lay under part of the present Lenin Square and the city also boasted many large public buildings, thermal baths and several basilicas. Serdica reached the height of its prosperity in the reign of Constantine who frequently visited the city and even toyed with the idea of making it the capital of the Eastern Empire, the new Rome. Between 316 and 323 the Emperor was frequently in the city and it was at this time that he described Serdica as 'My Rome'. On one reading of the evidence Constantine delivered a sermon 'to the assembly of the Saints' in the city on Good Friday 317. He was also in the city on the occasion of the final defeat of Licinius in 324. In 330 he wrote from Serdica to the **consularis** of Numidia and to the Church of Cirta about the treatment of schismatics.²³ Thus, in choosing Serdica as the site of a Council to solve the outstanding differences between Eastern and Western Christendom, Constans and Constantius were treading on hallowed ground — a site which would have appealed to their father whose mission was not only to secure the **pax Romana** but also unity within the Church. To emphasise the solemnity of their choice the Emperors directed that the bishops and their attendants could use the **cursus publicus**, although Constantius must have known that the system was already heavily used to sustain the Persian war. As we will see the **cursus** was all but wrecked through the burden placed on it by the one-hundred-and-seventy bishops who with other attendants came to the Orthodox and Eastern Councils. This must be borne in mind when the vexed question of the date of Serdica is examined. Transporting such a large number of prelates and their supporters was not easy and could not be accomplished overnight as some dating theories would suggest. Libanius later gives a vivid picture of the abuse of the **cursus** with animals dropping dead at the end of a journey. The Emperor Julian was to introduce stringent regulations concerning journeys for which official animals could be used.²⁴

At the time the preparations for the Council were in progress there were several factors which contributed to the tension between the Eastern and Western Churches beyond the immediate differences we have already noted. Up to the time of Constantine the Eastern and Western Churches largely went their own ways although they were aware, from New Testament times, that they were part of the **ecclesia catholica**, i.e. the one universal Body of Christ. As long as Christianity remained a **religio non licita** it had no need to formulate this unity in a way which would satisfy the Roman State or the world at large, although it is true that from the second century a Christian apologia directed towards a **modus vivendi** with the State had been advocated by certain Christian apologists of the Greek tradition.²⁵ The recognition of the Church by Constantine as a **religio licita** and the public funds lavished on the Church brought into being a new situation and represent a decisive event in human history, the results of which continue to be felt today. Constantine believed that the Church of the Empire must exhibit a visible unity or it would cease to be a **religio**

licita. The issue of the Unity of the Church, accepted in a spiritual sense by Christians in the pre-Nicene period, and which was in any case fundamentally a theological question, thus came to the fore in the years preceding Serdica in a new way. Constantine, and indeed his adviser Ossius, had little understanding of the East's bitter struggle over Christological issues, epitomized in the controversy between the two Dionysii²⁶ in the third century, most of which stemmed from the remarkable theological speculations of Origen. These controversies had in fact produced considerable divergence of views even among Eastern theologians. Constantine fondly imagined that the adoption of the **homoousios** at Nicaea would end the Arian troubles and quickly bring a visible unity to the Church. He did not realise that the **homoousios** was at the opposite pole to Origen's Logos speculation and so would be unacceptable to a number of Eastern bishops who followed Origen. Theological questions thus underlay the massive struggle for ecclesiastical power which went on between 325 and 342 and which we have described. The West, with which the Church of Alexandria (through Athanasius) had made common ground in theology and politics, tended to regard the Unity of the Church as fundamentally a Unity of theological doctrine. Many Easterns however looked for a *συνφωνία* of Church and State as best expressing the Church's Unity — the Church so becoming a cultural factor in society.²⁷ Thus to impress a visible Unity on the Church led inevitably to a clash of divergent theological positions. This lay below the canonical and jurisdictional issues so prominent in the period leading up to Serdica, e.g. that concerning the deposition of Athanasius at Tyre in 335 as a trouble-maker intent on wrecking what Constantine regarded as Church Unity. The theological divergence between East and West was complicated by the fact that Alexandria, a prominent centre of Greek-speaking Christianity, sided with Rome against the rest of the East. The reason for this lay not only in the masterful influence of Athanasius, who saw Rome as a bulwark against Arianism which he increasingly equated with the whole of Greek theology, but also possibly in a decline in the Greek cultural element in Alexandria. The rise of Coptic Christianity and the monastic movement should also not be ignored.²⁸ Thus on the eve of Serdica profound theological differences between East and West lay beneath more open differences of Church law. The imperial desire for a visible Unity of the Church was to come to grief on these differences. However in 342 Julius and Athanasius certainly believed that one more attempt should be made by the Emperors to gain Unity although they were not prepared to make any concessions at all. For them, by 342, most of Greek theology was equated with Arianism, which was a gross misrepresentation. What they really desired was unconditional surrender by the East.

Allied to these theological differences was the linguistic barrier between East and West which at Serdica was to require the production of Greek and Latin versions of documents. While it is true that until Justinian's time in the sixth century the Empire was in theory bi-lingual, in practice Latin began to be used in Rome in the late-second century and

we can trace a decline in the use of Greek in the West from the early-third century. Many easterners found Latin a difficult language and the number of native Greeks who were Latin-speakers was small. This linguistic discrepancy had consequences for theology as well as in the mundane problem of translating documents read at Councils. Latin, a concrete language, lacked the flexibility of Greek, and Latin theological terms, when translated into Greek, sometimes took on a different nuance. So the West regarded the Eastern doctrine of three hypostases in the Godhead as heretical as for them **hypostasis** was the equivalent of **ousia** and also the equivalent of the Latin term **substantia** which in the West, since the time of Tertullian, had been used for the Unity of the one Godhead. The Easterns, on the other hand, regarded the Western doctrine as tending towards Sabellianism, i.e. the belief that the single Godhead appears in three modes as Father, Son and Spirit, and this they saw in Marcellus' theology. So the linguistic division contributed towards the growing divergence between Eastern and Western theology.

Allied to these theological differences, which lay beneath the jurisdictional issue of Athanasius and Marcellus having been received into communion by the West, was another factor which should not be ignored. The question of human personality ranks large in the history of the period leading up to Serdica. Both Athanasius and Eusebius of Nicomedia were strong, dominant personalities, both leaders, who were unlikely to compromise on matters which they thought were important. While the proud phrase Athanasius **contra mundum** adequately describes Athanasius' unrelenting struggle against what he conceived to be Arianism it should not blind us to a fanatical side to his character which made little attempt to understand his opponents' viewpoint. Eusebius of Nicomedia, the Arian leader from 327—340, was equally blinded by the jurisdictional question of Athanasius' re-instatement by the West contrary to the verdict of Tyre in 335, so that it dominated the policy of the Arian leaders without their ever asking why the West had restored Athanasius and his fellows to communion. Regional loyalties were also not insignificant. The ascendancy of the Alexandrian see under Athanasius may have caused some Eastern bishops to espouse the cause of the rival sees of Antioch and Constantinople. And once the Roman see became decisively involved in the reign of Julius the same factor was operative. The Easterns feared the power of Rome and Rome itself came to fear an 'Eastern Papacy'.²⁹

Thus on the eve of Serdica many factors had combined to present insurmountable difficulties to the bringing into being of a visibly united Church. Issues of Canon law, legal jurisdiction, theology, Church politics, political and linguistic divergences were inextricably intertwined. Some of these issues were unperceived as the bishops from East and West made their way, using the **cursus publicus**, to Serdica on the direct orders of Constans and Constantius. That it was to be a turning point in the history of the Eastern and Western Churches was largely unrealised at the time.

CHAPTER 4

THE SITE AND DATE OF THE COUNCIL

The Western bishops, numbering between ninety-five and one hundred, arrived first at Serdica and promptly admitted Athanasius and his co-accused to communion in accordance with the decision of the Council of Rome. It is likely that the bishops brought with them a secretariat and other assistants and their proceedings must have been of some length in view of the opposition they encountered and the amount of business which they transacted, including the promulgation of about twenty Canons. It is often assumed that the Western bishops met only in one place, but this is an unwarranted assumption. Ossius, in his celebrated letter to Constantius (preserved by Athanasius in **Hist. Arianorum** 44,2) states: 'I was present at the Council of Serdica, when you and your brother of blessed memory assembled us all together; and on my own account I challenged the enemies of Athanasius, when they came to the Church where I abode (ελθόν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἐν ἣ ὥκουν ἐγώ), that if they had anything against him they might declare it'. The Eastern bishops, in their Encyclical, complain that Athanasius, Marcellus and the other deposed bishops were sitting with Ossius and Protogenes disputing and were moreover celebrating the divine mysteries in the midst of the Church (**in media ecclesia**).¹

By the fourth century bishops had become spokesmen for their cities and municipalities and not just for the Christian population. They were defenders of the corporate life of cities against imperial bureaucracy — so the Western bishops at Serdica in their letter to Constantius appealed not only for the liberty of the Church but also for the freedom of all citizens.

Iccirco laboratis et salutaribus consiliis rem publicam regitis, excubatis etiam et vigilatis, ut omnes, quibus imperatis, dulcissima libertate potiantur. non alia ratione, quae turbata sunt, componi, quae divulsa sunt, coherceri possint, nisi unusquisque nulla servitutis necessitate astrictus integrum habeat vivendi arbitrium. (CSEL 65, 182)

The city of Serdica had within its jurisdiction a large area and dedications by the city have been found eighty kilometres to the north-west and sixty kilometres to the north-east. So Protogenes, bishop of Serdica, was an important figure in his own right and not only as host to the Western assembly of bishops. He would undoubtedly have had his own basilica where he celebrated the eucharist and engaged in worship. It is possible that the building where the deposed bishops were celebrating the mysteries

with Ossius and Protogenes was this basilica, although its precise identification presents difficulties. Outside the Roman east gate, in the vicinity of the present Party building, two early Christian basilicas have been excavated² one superimposed on the other. The earlier Church, which is dated to the fourth century, was a small single-nave structure with an apse almost as wide as the nave and with a narthex where a fragment of geometric mural painting has survived. This Church was probably destroyed by the Visigoths. The larger Church was an early-fifth century basilica with a rounded apse and having a baptistery five metres from it (fig. 3). Outside the Roman wall and a few hundred metres from the earlier basilica described above was the first Church of S. Sophia which, in the fourth century, was a small single-nave structure with a rounded apse occupying an area of only 14 m. x 6 m. and situated under the east of the present Church.³ Only mortar foundations of its first pebble mosaic floor remain today (fig. 4). Excavations have shown however that it was richly decorated with mosaics of birds, trees and vines and geometric patterns. It is possible that other small Christian basilicas existed in Serdica in the fourth century although it is unlikely that any of these structures would have been of sufficient size to accommodate between ninety-five and one hundred bishops for regular sessions together with assistants and translators who would need the use of separate rooms. We must therefore perhaps envisage the use of one of these early Christian basilicas by Ossius, the president of the Western assembly, by Protogenes bishop of Serdica, and by other prominent bishops for worship and for negotiations not involving the whole body of bishops. To this basilica Ossius invited the Eastern leaders to come and appear before him alone, when he realised that they were adamant in their refusal to appear before the Western assembly *in toto* — only once again to be met with a refusal. For purposes of worship and celebrations of the eucharist it is possible that the other Western bishops split up and used several small basilicas.

Where, then, were the main legislative sessions of the Western assembly held? After discussions with archaeologists in Sofia⁴ I have come to the conclusion that the most likely venue was the civil building (not necessarily a Roman basilica) which has been uncovered on the site of the 'S. George' complex next to the Rotunda and on the present site of the Grand Hotel Balkan.⁵ By the 340's the Rotunda was in all probability a Christian martyrion although originally it may have been a pagan shrine dedicated to the protector of the city which was later translated into one of S. George, the national patron saint, often associated with the Thracian horseman. Some scholars argue that the whole S. George complex was erected as an imperial reception hall of the Constantinian period. The hall would have been of sufficient size to accommodate guards, attendants and officials in the courtyard and side rooms, while the Emperor himself could have come from the east room to the Rotunda to greet envoys and other persons who were to be honoured by an imperial audience.⁶ However it seems more likely, on present knowledge, that the structure next to the Rotunda was, in the fourth century, some kind of civil building perhaps

used for a variety of functions which itself had been built on an earlier pagan site, as the discovery of two pagan statues proves. The hall of this civil building, which had semi-circular and rectangular niches in the walls, was certainly of sufficient size to accommodate ninety-five to one hundred bishops and assistants for their formal sessions (fig. 2). The fact that the bishops used a civil building should cause no surprise as in the fourth century the distinction between the religious and secular spheres was not marked.⁷ It was taken for granted that religious acts were political and vice versa; the highest form of political life was the maintenance of the peace of the gods. So civil buildings usually had religious associations and could be used for a variety of purposes both political and religious. It was suggested to me (by Mr. Stanev) that the bishops may have resided at nights nearby in the Governor's residence (**praetorium**) measuring 115m. x 45m. which has been located under the present S. Nedelya's Church quite near to the S. George complex. This is a more plausible suggestion than that they resided with local clergy who were of insufficient numbers to accommodate such a large gathering. No more plausible is the statement of a seventeenth-century Italian visitor that the Council of Serdica was held at a monastery at the foot of Mount Vitosha several km outside the city, which may be discounted as hearsay.⁸ The Eastern group of bishops certainly resided near to the Westerns as messages were passed between them and even shouting occurred.⁹

The site of the Eastern gathering of bishops is however not in doubt. Athanasius preserves the remarkable fact that they resided, as a group, in the imperial residence: 'When they arrived and saw that the cause was to be conducted as simply an ecclesiastical one, without the interference of the Court or of soldiers.... Perceiving this to be the case, although they had come with great zeal, as thinking that we should be afraid to meet them, yet now when they saw our alacrity, they shut themselves up in the imperial residence, for they had their abode there' ἀποκλείουσιν ἑαυτοὺς ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ· ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὄκουν).¹⁰ We are not told why the eastern bishops were allowed to reside in the residence where only high-ranking officers of State usually resided - and particularly so in Serdica which was in Constans' domain. Probably the influence of the imperial commissioners Counts Musonianus and Hesychius (the Castrensis), who accompanied the group, was decisive.¹¹ Musonianus was himself a distinguished figure who had assisted at the deposition of Eustathius of Antioch and later was to hold the Eastern prefecture from 354-358. In any event, the eastern leaders needed to keep an eye on their followers and threatened any defectors with severe penalties. The subsequent fate of two bishops, Arius and Asterius, who deserted to the Western camp illustrates this point.¹² Can we identify the παλάτιον mentioned by Athanasius? This is undoubtedly the **palatium**, the imperial residence or court,¹³ and its most likely identification is in the huge complex of buildings which lies below the grounds of the present Hotel Rila and the Corecom building on Tsar Kaloyan Street. Excavations here uncovered a large complex with a pe-

ristyle courtyard enclosed by rooms, both octagonal and circular, some decorated with mosaic. Water pipes and hypocausts suggest that living quarters once existed and the excavators believe that this building was constructed as a residence for the Emperor Constantine.¹⁴ It is likely that the eastern bishops stayed here as a group during their time in Serdica and from here messages were conveyed to the Western group meeting in the nearby building next to the Rotunda. It was in the imperial residence that the Eastern bishops drew up their Encyclical letter which may have been despatched to named individuals once they had reached Philippopolis on their way home after the breakdown of negotiations at Serdica.

Our short investigation of the site of the two Councils has shown that the well organised Western group, which arrived first, were accommodated in less sumptuous surroundings than the Easterns. The reasons for this are not far to see. The Council had been jointly convened by Constans and Constantius but, unlike at Nicaea, the Western group were intent that no imperial representatives should attend, i.e. they wished to concentrate solely on jurisdictional and ecclesiastical matters without interference from the State. The Westerns knew that State commissioners had been present at previous Eastern Councils and suspected that the Easterns would try and influence these in their favour. The Easterns had apparently been persuaded, at Philippopolis on their way to the Council, to continue their journey by Count Philagrius, an ex-prefect of Egypt.¹⁵ There was a great danger of defections and the Eastern Arian leaders could have used the presence of imperial counts to enforce their will on the bishops. Hence it was natural that they should stay in one, well-guarded building and not be allowed to move about the city - and what better than the Emperor's residence? The fact that Constantius was a joint-convener of the Council no doubt helped in obtaining the use of this residence for the Eastern bishops.

The date of the Council has long been the subject of controversy. Socrates **H E** 2,20 and Sozomen **H E** 3,20 dated it to the consulship of Rufinus and Eusebius in the eleventh year after Constantine's death, i.e. 347. The sequence of events recorded by Athanasius¹⁶ does not however support this and the discovery of the **Historia Acephala** (contained in the **Collectio Theodosii Diaconi** of **Codex Verona L X**)¹⁷ and of the **Index and Festal Letters of Athanasius**¹⁸ definitely disprove this date. The former shows that Athanasius returned to Alexandria, after his second exile, on 21 October 346 and, as his return occurred at least two years after the Council as is shown by **Festal Letter** 18 and the **Index**, this could not have been held later than 344; the Council could not however have been held earlier than the summer of 342, i.e. shortly after Constans and Athanasius met at Milan in the spring of 342.¹⁹ Today only two dating theories are held, viz. that the Council was held in the autumn of either 342 or 343. Schwartz, Lietzmann, Telfer, Schneemelcher and Richard favour the former while Hefele, Loofs, Feder, Zeiller, Caspar, de Clercq, Hess and Ramureanu favour the later date.

Schwartz, in his celebrated study, placed great emphasis on an unidentified historical fragment associated with the **Historia Acephala**: **Tunc temporis ingerebantur molestiae imperatoribus synodum convocare, ut insidiarentur Paulo episcopo Constantinopolitano per sugestionem Eusebii Acacii Theodori Valentis Stephani et sociorum ipsorum, et congregata est synodus consolatu Constantini et Constantini apud Sardicam.**²⁰ The Ballerinis emended this to read **et congregata est synodus consolatu Constantii IV et Constantis III**, i.e. 346, but Schwartz, with the help of the **Festal Letters**, corrected this to read **Constantii III et Constantis II** i.e. 342. He further argued that the statement in **Index** 15 of the **Festal Letter** for 343 'in this year the Synod of Serdica was held' referred to Egyptian calendrical reckoning for the year beginning on 29 August (1 Thot); i.e. the Council met in the Autumn of 342 shortly after the beginning of the Egyptian year. M. Richard has recently supported Schwartz's interpretation and argues that the Council probably met in September or at the beginning of October 342.²¹ Loofs and Zeiller,²² on the other hand, argued that the chronology behind the **Index** was based on the Roman consular year, which began on 1 January, and that therefore the Council convened in the autumn of 343, the fragment associated with the **Historia Acephala** having confused the preliminary moves for the Council with the assembly of the Council itself. The question of the date should therefore be studied in the light of other considerations.

Crucial to this is Athanasius' account of his movements before the Council recorded in his **Apol. ad Constantium** 4 and the known movements of the Emperor Constans. Athanasius states that after three years had passed Constans wrote to him 'in the fourth year' commanding a meeting at Milan to which he acceded. This meeting in the fourth year of Athanasius' exile²³ could not have taken place earlier than April 342. As Constans was at Savaria in Pannonia in April 342 a somewhat later date is in fact probable for the Milan meeting: 'In the fourth year' does not necessarily imply a date at the beginning of that year. At Milan Constans informed Athanasius that he had despatched letters to Constantius requesting that a Council should be called²⁴ - but we are told nothing of Constantius' reply - the Eastern Emperor was, in any event, heavily occupied with the Persian war at this time. We have to allow time for negotiations between the two Emperors, for the sending out of invitations to the widely scattered episcopate, and for the time required to assemble the bishops at Serdica in view of the fact that the **cursus publicus** was heavily overloaded at this period. Moreover many of the Eastern bishops were reluctant to come and travelled with deliberate slowness. In their Encyclical they complain of the long journey, of the old, weak and sick among them, of their churches neglected at a time of great danger to the Empire.²⁵ While some of these complaints should be taken **cum grano salis** there is little doubt that the Easterns dragged their heels on the way to Serdica. These facts alone make it unlikely that the Council could have convened as early as the autumn of 342 — considerations ignored by M. Richard, the latest advocate of the 342 date. Moreover there are other

considerations which support this inference. We know that after his interview with Constans Athanasius remained in Milan until Constans sent for him to go to Trèves in Gaul to which place Ossius had been ordered to travel in preparation for the journey to Serdica.²⁶ This is extraordinary if the Council was about to assemble in Serdica as Trèves, where Athanasius had built up a following in the West during his first exile, is not near any road to Serdica. The only way to avoid this is by throwing doubt on the reliability of Athanasius' detailed account of his movements. The difficulties however disappear if the Council met in the autumn of 343 as sufficient time is then allowed for the negotiations prior to the Council and for the actual assembling of the bishops. It is relevant in this connexion, to note that Constans' presence is attested in Milan in December of 342 and in Trèves in June 343.²⁷ As V. C. de Clercq points out invitations to the bishops for the Council of Nicaea were sent out at least five months before its opening and there is no reason to assume a shorter period in the case of Serdica.²⁸

Other arguments support a 343 date. The **Index** to **Festal Letter** 15 (342/3) and **Festal Letter** 18 (346) state that agreement was reached at Serdica to celebrate Easter on the same day for the next fifty years. Yet in the year 343 Rome celebrated Easter on 3 April and Alexandria on 27 March. Thus, on a 342 dating, the first Easter after the Council was celebrated in direct defiance of its Easter ruling. If however the Council met in the autumn of 343 then the discrepancy at the previous Easter provided an occasion for considering the problem afresh. Schwartz and Richard dismiss the discrepancy on the grounds that Gregory of Capadocia was **de facto** holder of the see of Alexandria in 343, 344 and 345 and it was therefore natural that he would follow the Alexandrian cycle. This is however to underestimate the tenacity of Athanasius who continued to communicate with the Alexandrian clergy although in exile. Thus in 340 the **Festal Index** states that Athanasius gave notice of Easter to the Alexandrian presbyters in a short note; the letters for 341 and 342 appear in the collection and the **Index** states that Athanasius wrote a letter in 343 although this is now missing; in 344 Athanasius, according to the **Index**, again wrote a short note concerning Easter to the Alexandrian presbyters although he was unable to write to those outside the Egyptian metropolis. Thus, on the theory that the Council of Serdica met in the autumn of 342 and promulgated its Easter decree, there is no reason to doubt that Athanasius could have then communicated this to the Alexandrian clergy in his letter for Easter 343.

Another indication that the Council was held in the autumn of 343 is provided by a list of Jewish dates for the Passover which is included in the Christian **Cyclus Paschalis** which was adopted by the Eastern Council at Serdica and which, to our knowledge, has not been noted before in discussions on the date of the Council. This list covers sixteen years only, i.e. from 328 to 343. Schwartz observed that the dates for the Passover cease with the year **after** the one in which the table was worked out (i.e. 342 on Schwartz's view). This seems a very odd fact as we know

that the Jews in Antioch (from where the Eastern tables emanated) did not have a calendar worked out in advance. It seems much more likely that the Eastern Christians would bring with them to Serdica the Jewish passover dates up to the present time, i.e. 343. We have discussed the Easter cycles in more detail in Chapter 9.

A further indication that the Council took place in 343 is afforded by Athanasius' movements after the Council. **Index** (16 (343/4) states of Athanasius: 'being at Naissus on his return from the Synod, he there celebrated Easter. Of this Easter Day he gave notice in few words to the presbyters of Alexandria, but he was unable to do so to the country'; i.e. Athanasius celebrated Easter 344 at Naissus in Dacia Mediterranea which legend knew as the birthplace of the Emperor Constantine. Gaudentius, bishop of Naissus, had attended the Western Council at Serdica where he proposed one of the canons and he incurred the wrath of the Eastern bishops for his earlier connexion with Paul of Constantinople. **Index** 17 states that Athanasius spent Easter 345 at Aquileia and eighteen months later on 24 Paophi, i.e. 21 October 346, he returned to Alexandria. These movements are corroborated by Athanasius himself in **Apol. ad Constantium** 4 and the evidence, as a whole, points unmistakeably to the Council of Serdica as having been held in 343, not 342, as otherwise we would have expected some reference to Athanasius' whereabouts at Easter 343.

In 1950 W. Telfer, in a lengthy discussion of Paul of Constantinople,²⁹ asserted that his results made a 342 date for the Council secure. According to Socrates **H E** 2,20 Paul was restored to his see by the Western Orthodox Council of Serdica, a statement not borne out by the Western Encyclical which, while dealing fully with the cases of Athanasius and Marcellus, has no reference to Paul. The exact sequence of events in the Paul drama is difficult to unravel. Telfer in his ingenious reconstruction presented Paul as the 'Ambrose of Constantinople', defiantly standing up to the machinations of the Palace, stirring in the masses of Constantinople a romantic loyalty that kept them steadfast for more than fifteen years: 'of those who followed Paul in his bishopric, Chrysostom and Flavian imitated his attempt at independence and shared his tragic fate'.³⁰

Telfer's reconstruction of the events connected with Paul is based on an early chronicle (**legendum**) which he believes originated in the Church of Constantinople. This **legendum**, which largely consists of a narrative of the career of Paul, appears in two recensions the archetype of which, according to Telfer, is to be dated c. 450 A. D. Behind this is a **Life of Paul**, probably written c. 361 in Alexandria by an exiled follower of Paul, and which Telfer believes is a valuable historical source. Telfer's arguments are however based on internal analysis only and are without external support. Equally, as F. de'Calvalieri argued,³¹ the author of the **legendum** might have drawn directly on the Alexandrian Chronicle of which the **Historia Acephala** is a fragmentary translation. And even if we accept that the **legendum** contains reliable historical material not all of Telfer's reconstruction is to be accepted. According to the **legendum** the people of Constantinople refused to allow Paul to attend the Council of Serdica

'fearing the plots of his opponents'. There follows an account of the events surrounding the death of Hermogenes, Constantius' officer, at the hands of Paul's supporters and of Paul's banishment. As Hermogenes' death took place in 342 and as Paul was to have left for Serdica before this Telfer argued that the Council must have taken place in 342.³² However this does not follow if the opposition of the Constantinopolitan populace to Paul's going to Serdica arose consequent on the negotiations preparatory to the Council. The silence of the Orthodox Encyclical concerning Paul, according to Telfer, is due to the fact that it was drawn up prior to Paul's difficulties at Constantinople and his subsequent exile. However there may well have been other reasons for the Western silence. The Orthodox had been uneasy about Paul for some time - on Telfer's reconstruction Paul had been present when Athanasius sought to gain a hearing from Constantine in late 335 or early 336 after the Council of Tyre and had even assented to the sentence of exile passed on Athanasius. Athanasius would not have forgotten this. Moreover the Orthodox would not want to get involved in civil strife in Constantinople as this could affect their relationship with the Emperor Constantius. At the Orthodox Council of Serdica the case of Paul was regarded as closed and his second condemnation regarded as an event of the past - with which may be compared the Western support given to Paul during his first exile, notably by Maximin of Trèves.³³ By the time of Serdica Paul had been dropped by the Orthodox and this is the main reason for their silence about him. Even the Roman Council of 341 seems not to have considered his case.

At an opposite stance to this treatment is the Eastern Encyclical of Serdica which gives some space to Paul. Protogenes, bishop of Serdica, is castigated for the fact that he had once anathematized Marcellus and Paul but had since received them into communion. Asclepas, who had come to Constantinople to support Paul, had committed foul atrocities and murders in the Church of Constantinople and had communicated with Paul and exchanged the Scriptures with him.³⁴ The named recipients of the Eastern Encyclical are strictly enjoined not to communicate with Paul who, with other Orthodox leaders, had been thrown out of the Holy Church.³⁵ Maximin of Trèves is castigated by the Easterns for being the first to communicate with Paul, an evil and wicked man, whom he was responsible for recalling to Constantinople where many murders were committed on his account.

The reason for this adverse picture of Paul in the Eastern Encyclical is not far to seek. Even apart from the possibility that some of the charges against Paul were true, the see of Constantinople was of growing importance and the Easterns were intent on having their own candidate as its bishop. Paul had been made bishop against their will; his deposition and the translation of Eusebius from Nicomedia to Constantinople strengthened their hand there but Paul's return in late 341 or early 342, after Eusebius' death, caused strife and only with difficulty was the Eusebian bishop re-instated.³⁶ And so, in their Encyclical which will be discussed fully later, the Easterns blacken the figure of Paul and seek to prejudice

the minds of its recipients against his name. To the West however the case of Paul was of little moment as although Western bishops had communicated with him in the past that was now finished. Even the Canons of the Western Council which seem to refer to Eusebius of Nicomedia's translation to Constantinople, ignore Paul. His fate was the same as that which was to befall the more significant figure of Marcellus after Serdica. The evidence seems to indicate that a period had elapsed between the events in Constantinople and the assembly of the Council in Serdica and accordingly this must have occurred in 343 and not in 342. Far from making a 342 date secure Telfer's reconstruction points in the other direction, viz. that the negotiations preparatory to Serdica were the cause of opposition to Paul's going to the Council.

We have already noted the brief reference in the Encyclical issued from Serdica by the Easterns concerning the deposition of Asclepas **qui ante decem et septem annos episcopatus honore discinctus est.**³⁷ We have argued that this refers to a first Council held in Antioch in 326 to deal with the question of Eustathius as is shown by the failure to refer to Eusebius of Nicomedia in the sources - for the latter had not yet returned to his office (327). If this date is secure then a period of seventeen years would date the Council in 343 and not 342. This later date also coheres better with the sequence of events following the Council which has recently been discussed by M. Richard.³⁸ Athanasius, in **Hist Arianorum** 20, states that the Western Council sent two bishops, Vicentius of Capua and Euphrates of Agrippina (i.e. Cologne), to Antioch to obtain the consent of Constantius to their decisions, viz. that the deposed bishops should return to their sees. On the arrival of the Western delegates a plot was hatched against them at the Easter season, instigated by the local bishop, Stephen, which miscarried; the result was that Stephen was deposed in favour of a eunuch Leontius whom Athanasius regards as another Arian. When Constantius realised what had happened he gave orders that the Alexandrian clergy, who had been banished to Armenia, should be released and that clergy and laity who had remained loyal to Athanasius in Alexandria should now be free from persecution.³⁹ When Gregory died 'about ten months after' Constantius sent for Athanasius according him every mark of honour. As the death of Gregory occurred on 26 June 345, as is shown by a comparison of Festal **Index** 18 with **Historia Acephala** 1 and **Apol. c. Arianos** 51 and 57,⁴⁰ it follows that Constantius stopped the persecution of the Athanasians in August 344 and, as this was consequent on the arrival of two Western delegates from Serdica, this is likely to have happened about Easter 344. It is then probable that the Council took place in the Autumn of 343 which would allow time for the delegation to Antioch to be assembled and for Constans to write to his brother supporting their cause.

In order to evade the logic of this sequence of events Schwartz and Lietzmann⁴¹ placed the arrival of the delegates at Easter (27 March) 343 but this founders on the rock of the death of Gregory which is securely dated to June 345. Telfer, on the other hand, argues that we must abandon

Athanasius' chronology. While the ten-month interval between Constantius' restoration of liberty to the Athanasian congregations in Alexandria and Gregory's death is the kind of time-interval that people would remember, the interval between the death of Gregory and the deposition of Stephen would not be remembered. Athanasius ignores, according to Telfer, the lapse of time between the fall of Stephen and the benefit experienced by the Athanasians in Egypt. Athanasius' thesis is highly questionable for the probable tempo of the movement was slower and two or three months is too small an interval. On Telfer's theory of the dating of Serdica this interval must have been fourteen or fifteen months but this seems far too long a gap in time. Presumably Constantius did not wait for so long a period before communicating the results of Western Serdica to Constantius. Telfer's argument is largely special pleading to support a 342 date for the Council which he had arrived at on other grounds. M. Richard goes even further and states that we must wholly abandon Athanasius' evidence and admit an eighteen-month interval between the Council (342) and the arrival of the legates at Antioch on the grounds that the violent passions aroused by the Council needed time to subside and also that time was needed for the diplomatic negotiations underlying the legation.⁴³ However it would seem that a period of about six months (from the autumn of 343 to Easter 344) was quite sufficient for these transactions to have taken place. And a period of about six months (from April to October 344) would be quite sufficient between Stephen's deposition and Constantius' ordering the persecution of the Athanasians to cease. The sequence of events after Serdica would appear to cohere best with the Council having taken place in the autumn of 343. The Westerns had everything to lose by delaying to send envoys to Constantius and we would be unwise to abandon Athanasius' account in favour of Theodoret⁴⁴ who makes the legation to Antioch solely the choice of Constantius.

CHAPTER 5

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TWO ASSEMBLIES

There was considerable ignorance in the West concerning Eastern affairs up to the time when Constantius became sole Ruler of the Empire and persecution reached the West. Rufinus placed the Council of Tyre (335) in the reign of Constantius and Sulpicius Severus prolonged Constantine's reign until the time of Serdica — and both writers confused the various exiles of Athanasius. The technical terms of Eastern theology were also unfamiliar in the West. Considering the widespread ignorance as to what was at stake it is remarkable that so many Western bishops came to Serdica. Among the ninety-five to one hundred bishops who eventually arrived were the aged Ossius of Cordova, who had presided at the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius, Marcellus and Asclepas. Julius, bishop of Rome, did not attend in person but was represented by three delegates, the presbyters Archidamus and Philoxenus and the deacon Leo.¹ At Serdica they were welcomed by the aged local bishop, Protogenes, who, like Ossius had been present at Nicaea. At Nicaea Constantine had been present and had taken a leading role but it may be that Constans did not have the passionate interest in the Unity of Church, reflecting the Unity of Empire, which dominated the mind and policy of his father. The division of the Empire into three spheres in 337 meant that the Western Emperor was no longer sole Ruler; in any event it seems that Constans was content to allow the Western assembly to get on with its own business without requiring his personal presence. Although he was nominally a Catholic Christian the attainment of justice for the victims of Eastern oppression and the re-establishment of jurisdictional order could be left to the bishops themselves - a decision which they welcomed. Whether the Western Emperor realised that the Church was in danger of permanent schism is questionable. We have also to take into account the deterioration in Constans' character which occurred after 340 as a result of his newly acquired power. His indulgence in unlawful pleasures became the subject of scandal notwithstanding his profession of the Orthodox faith. The cause of justice, not for the first time in Christian history, became promoted by the influence of gold. The Western bishops had good cause, quite apart from their growing fear of the influence of the State in religious matters, to congratulate themselves that neither the Emperor, nor his commissioners, were present at their Council.

A list of provinces from which bishops came to the Council is given in the Encyclical letter sent by the Western assembly to the Alexandrian

Church: this mentions Rome, Spain, Gaul, Italy, Campania, Calabria, Apuleia, Africa, Sardinia, Pannonia, Moesia, Dacia, Noricum, Siscia, Dardania, the other Dacia, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, Epirus, Thrace, Rhodope, Palestine, Arabia, Crete and Egypt.² This is more likely to be accurate than the longer list preserved by Theodoret who enumerates thirty-seven provinces.³ Athanasius himself, writing in 357-8 (**Hist. Arianorum** 17), states that the Holy Council had been assembled out of thirty-five provinces which is at variance with the list in the Encyclical. However Athanasius, as we shall see, tended to exaggerate the support he had received and it is possible that he counted all the provinces which comprised the dioceses of Italy, Gaul and Spain which would add about ten names to the provinces listed in the Encyclical letter. Since the sees of some of the bishops who attended are unknown it is difficult to establish the distribution of bishops for each province. However it is possible to establish that about seven came from Spain, headed by the venerable Ossius, three from Gaul, four from Africa, and nine from Italy. The small Italian representation is surprising in view of the fact that Athanasius had long had contacts there and that Julius, bishop of Rome, was behind him. It is true that Protasius of Milan, Severus of Ravenna, Januarius of Beneventum, Calepodius of Naples, Fortunatian of Aquileia, Lucius of Verona, Sterconius of Apuleia, Ursacius of Brescia and Vincent of Capua (who had been a Roman legate at Nicaea) were prominent Italian bishops who attended the Council. However by 343 the Italian episcopate numbered more than one hundred and the overall small Italian representation is noticeable. After his return to Alexandria in 346 Athanasius stated that more than four hundred bishops held communion with him, among them bishops 'from Great Rome and all Italy'.⁴ This however is an exaggeration and is not the whole story. The Eastern Encyclical also drawn up at Serdica, is addressed, not only to the whole Church, but to specific individuals who were presumably favourably disposed to the Eastern position: **Gregorio Alexandriae episcopo, Nicomediae episcopo, Carthagini episcopo, Campaniae episcopo, Neapolis Campaniae episcopo, Ariminensi clero, Campaniae episcopo, Salonae Dalmatiae episcopo, Amfioni, Donato, Desiderio, Fortunato, Euthicio, Maximo, Sinferonti et omnibus per orbem terrarum consacerdotibus nostris...**⁵ The references to two Campanian bishops, the bishop of Naples in Campania and to Fortunatus of Naples are significant and suggest that, in the fertile crescent around the Bay of Naples, there were some bishops who were attracted to the Eastern, and not the Athanasian position, i.e. the Italian episcopate in this area was probably divided on the crucial issue of the recognition of Athanasius and Marcellus. It is interesting that Januarius, bishop of Beneventum, who attended Western Serdica, later became patron-saint of Naples and was venerated as a martyr. Fortunatus, addressed in the exordium to the Eastern Encyclical, later disappears from the lists of bishops of Naples and in the Western list of those attending Serdica Calepodius appears as bishop of Naples.⁶ These notices suggest that there may have been rival claimants who disputed the see.⁷ In any event the bishops of Naples and

Campania were split between supporting Julius and the Easterns. Athanasius' statement that the Italian bishops were solidly behind Julius of Rome is thus an *ex parte* view. We know that Campania was strongly hellenised and that this persisted in the Roman period.⁸ The ports of the Bay of Naples had long-standing connexions with the East and it is possible that Eastern influence, even in theological and Church jurisdictional matters, was strong in this area. Was this one reason why Julius did not attend the Orthodox assembly at Serdica but was only represented by Philoxenus, Archidamus and the deacon Leo? Was Julius aware that he could not carry all the Italian bishops with him on the Athanasius issue and that he might be controverted concerning this pertinent fact at the Council? The excuse which the orthodox bishops give for Julius' absence in their letter sent to him from the Council appears to make the best of a bad job; his excuse for not attending is 'honourable and pressing', viz. the fact that schismatical wolves or heretical dogs might attack him.⁹ This was however merely a cover-up. The statement of de Clercq that the Western assembly at Serdica was 'indubitably representative of the entire Latin Christianity'¹⁰ is hardly borne out by the facts. There were misgivings about Athanasius in the West, as well as in the East. The bishop of Alexandria had not convinced everyone of the rightness of his cause.

The number of bishops who participated in the Orthodox Council can be determined with a fair degree of accuracy. Four lists of signatories are now extant but none is complete.¹¹ However by combining these lists and by studying other notices the Ballerini brothers and A. Feder, in an exhaustive study, drew up a list of ninety-seven names.¹² Athanasius states that 'one hundred and seventy bishops, more or less, assembled at the city of Serdica both for the East and West.'¹³ As the number attending the Eastern Council was between seventy-five and eighty this approximately confirms the numbers proposed by Feder. Higher numbers for the Western Council are given by Socrates and Sozomen 'about three hundred bishops from the western parts of the Empire'¹⁴ but this appears to be based on the list of two hundred and eighty-two bishops appended to the main Encyclical letter of the Western assembly given in Athanasius' *Apol. contra Arianos* 48-50. Athanasius however states that this list included the names of those not present at Serdica who subsequently subscribed their names to the Encyclical, some at Synods. Hans Lietzmann, rather surprisingly, follows Socrates and Sozomen in stating that the West sent almost three hundred delegates.¹⁵ We will however not be far wrong if we accept a figure of between ninety-five and one-hundred bishops at the Council.

The majority of the bishops attending came from provinces not too remote from Serdica, viz. Illyricum, Noricum, Pannonia (prima and secunda), Savia, Moesia prima, Dacia (Ripensis and Mediterranea), Dardania, Macedonia, Epirus, Thessalia, Achaëa and the island of Crete. A few came from Thrace, such as Bassus of Diocletianopolis, whose presence among the Westerns could have been due to political, rather than theological or ecclesiastical considerations. Diocletianopolis (Hissar) was an

important see in the fourth century when the city covered a larger area than that of Serdica; it was the third most important city in Thrace after Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and Beroe (Stara Zagora). It is possible that its bishop did not relish being subservient to Eutychius, bishop of Philippopolis, and Demophilus, bishop of Beroe, both of whom were strong Eastern supporters, and so defected to the Western position. However not many came from the territories dominated by the Eastern leadership apart from the bishops exiled from the east and a few others, such as Lucius of Adrianopolis who, with some lay members of his congregation, was to suffer the wrath of Constantius on his return to his see. Several Egyptian bishops appear to have attended the Council together with two bishops, who escaped from the Eastern group and defected to the Orthodox after their arrival in Serdica, viz. Asterius of Arabia and Arius of Palestine.¹⁶ There were however no Nicenes in Asia before the reign of Valens.

Although the sees of about twenty bishops are unknown and others cannot be determined due to textual corruption a study of the geographical distribution of the sees of the remainder shows that the number of Latin speakers was considerable - on present knowledge at least thirty-three were Latin speakers and thirty-eight Greek speakers. This distribution is unique in fourth century Church Councils at which Greek speakers always heavily outnumbered Latin speakers. This might have been the case at Serdica if the Eastern bishops, numbering nearly eighty, had joined the Western assembly as planned. However the considerable number of Latin speakers meant that a bi-lingual record was essential, even if some bishops spoke both Latin and Greek.¹⁷ The fact that two texts of the Canons issued by the Council are extant, one Greek and the other Latin, supports this.¹⁸ It is also significant that the Encyclical letter of the Western Council exists in both Latin and Greek versions, probably originally independent of each other. The bi-lingual character of documents read at Synods is well attested for the fifth century and it became an established custom to insert original Latin documents, and their Greek translations (and vice-versa) into Synodal **Acta**, after original and translation had been read to the Synod.¹⁹ Although no **Acta** of the Council of Serdica have survived²⁰ there are nevertheless indications, in the Encyclical letter, that documents were read to the Council: 'For there were read certain false letters of Theognius and his fellows against our fellow ministers Athanasius, Marcellus and Asclepas, written with the design of exasperating the Emperors against them';²¹ 'the book of our fellow minister Marcellus was also read';²² 'Our fellow minister Asclepas also produced reports which had been drawn up at Antioch in the presence of his accusers and Eusebius of Caesarea'.²³ These documents must have been in Greek and Latin translations would have been required for the non-Greek speaking bishops. We must therefore envisage that translators accompanied the Western delegation at Serdica. We will have occasion to discuss this further at a later point in our investigation.

Ossius of Cordova undoubtedly presided at the Western assembly, as he had done at Nicaea - no doubt owing his appointment to Constans.

This is explicitly stated by Athanasius, who was present, and by Theodoret.²⁴ In every list of signatories Ossius signed first, even before the Roman legates, except in the list at the end of the letter written by Athanasius to the Churches of Mareotis where his name is omitted. The Eastern Encyclical refers to 'those with Ossius' or 'those with Ossius and Protogenes'²⁵ and Ossius, as we will see later, took the lead in inviting the Eastern leaders to meet him personally in the hope of avoiding a deadlock. Moreover Ossius proposed many of the disciplinary canons enacted by the Council. It is unlikely that the local bishop Protogenes, who was also prominent at the Council, acted as co-president with Ossius although he too was of advanced age. The linking of his name with that of Ossius is found mainly in the Eastern Encyclical and is due to the fact that the Eastern bishops bore a special grudge against the bishop of Serdica on the grounds that he had once been anti-Marcellian but now appeared as a supporter of the bishop of Ancyra. The Western bishops clearly held Ossius in great esteem as is shown by the tribute they paid to him in their Encyclical: **et maxime venerabilis senectae Ossium, qui et propter aetatem et confessionem et tanti temporis probatam fidem, qui tantum laborem id aetatis pro ecclesiae utilitate sustinuit, ut omni reverentia dignissimus habeatur.**²⁶ Moreover his long career and service at the imperial court adequately fitted him for the presidency of a Council convened to re-establish jurisdictional order in the Church.

The Eastern group of bishops, which arrived in Serdica from Philippopolis and shut themselves up in the imperial residence, were accompanied by imperial counts, unlike the Western group. They arrived after the Westerns had established themselves but apparently had no secretariat. However their leaders had already decided to keep a watch for possible defectors and not to attend any sessions of the Council. How long they stayed in Serdica is unknown but the fact that they drew up an Encyclical letter there, which may not have been despatched until they reached Philippopolis on their return home,²⁷ is an indication that they regarded themselves as a rival Council. The fact that the leaders were Greek speaking probably meant that the Encyclical was originally composed in Greek. We do not know when the Greek version of this letter was translated into Latin but, in view of the presence of Latin speakers among the addressees of the letter, this is likely to have been early on. Moreover we have to take into account the fact that some of the bishops present from north and south of the Danube were Latin speaking. The numbers of Eastern bishops who finally reached Serdica can be determined within strict limits. Socrates and Sozomen²⁸ give their number as seventy-six while the list of signatories attached to the Encyclical letter, the only extant list, has seventy-three names.²⁹ However Eusebius of Pergamon is mentioned twice in this list and three other names must be added, viz. Maris, Macedonius and Ursacius, whose presence is attested by the text of the Encyclical itself. Elsewhere in the Encyclical the Eastern bishops state that they numbered eighty.³⁰ We can therefore be certain that between seventy-five

and eighty Eastern bishops came to Serdica and the fact that their number was less than that of the Westerns may be one reason why they were reluctant to join the Orthodox assembly as they feared that they might be outvoted. Since the death of Eusebius of Nicomedia the Easterns lacked decisive leadership and they had no bishop who could rival the experience and standing of Ossius or the magnetic influence of Athanasius. Stephen of Antioch signed their Encyclical first and, in all probability, took a leading part in the Eastern deliberations; he subsequently was to take part in a plot against the delegates sent to Antioch to report on the decisions of the Western Council which resulted in his deposition and to Constantius' relaxing the harsh measures which had been taken against the Alexandrian clergy. However at Serdica Stephen was in the ascendancy in the Eastern group. Other influential bishops were Acacius, Menophantes, the aged Maris of Chalcedon, Theodore of Heraclea and two defectors from the West, Valens of Mursa and Ursacius of Singidunum who may have been bilingual in Latin and Greek. These two bishops were to play a major role in the conflict between Orthodoxy and Arianism in the period after Serdica. Among other bishops was Ischyrras,³¹ whose case took up much time in the deliberations of the Western assembly. Some of the leading Eastern bishops present at Serdica had also attended the Council of Tyre in 335 and the Dedication Council in Antioch in 341. It is also interesting that among their number were five former Meletian bishops named in the schedule presented by Meletius to bishop Alexander, viz. Callinicus of Pelusium, Isaac of Letopolis, Eudaemon of Tanis, Lucius of Antinopolis and Ammonius of Diospolis (**Apol. c. Arianos** 71). By this time many of the Meletians had made common cause with the Easterns.

It is significant that the Eastern bishops had their eyes on their standing in the wider Church. This is shown by the fact that their Encyclical was addressed to individuals who presumably were thought to be in sympathy with the Eastern position or, at the least, not insensitive to a bid for support. Gratus, bishop of Carthage, was present and subscribed to the decisions of the Western Council,³² yet the Eastern bishops also address **Carthaginis episcopo** and **Donato**. Donatism, by the mid 340's, was not consciously anti-imperial and Donatus himself took steps to improve his relations with the Church outside Africa. Augustine mentions possible connexions between the Donatists and the Eastern Council of Serdica.³³ Thus the Eastern bishops, while concerned with the immediate jurisdictional issues which came to the fore at Serdica, were also angling for wider support. The struggle for positions of ecclesiastical power, which dominated the 330's, was continued at and after Serdica.

A study of the sees of bishops present at Serdica is also of importance for the history of the expansion of Christianity in the Northern and Southern Danubian provinces of the Empire and also for the history of its penetration north of the Danube into Dacia Traiana. This shows that Christianity had been established in Geto-Dacia Rumania long before the work of Nicetas of Remesiana (366-414) whom older study had regarded

as the apostle and first missionary of that region.³⁴ A significant number of bishops from Roman townships at a greater or lesser distance from Remesiana were present at Serdica. Among these were five situated on the Danube, viz. Singidunum (Belgrade), Viminacium (Costolat), Aquae (Negotin), Castra Martis (Koula) and Oescus (Gigen). There were also other sees whose bishops did not attend the Council, as well as bishoprics situated further afield in the provinces of Moesia inferior, Scythia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, Dalmatia, Sivia, Pannonia (prima) and Noricum. The existence of a bishopric presupposes a Christian population with priests, deacons, those in minor orders and congregations of believers. Some of these bishoprics, such as that at Sirmium (Mitrovita) existed at least from the beginning of the fourth century or earlier as Iraenei, an early bishop, died in the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian on 6 April 304.³⁵ In the judgement of I. Ramureanu,³⁶ who has made a detailed study (in Rumanian) of the sees in this area, Christianity had begun to penetrate into Roman-Geto-Dacea, on the right bank of the Danube, in the second half of the third century long before Nicetas occupied the see of Remesiana in Dacia Mediterranea. He also shows that, in the same period, Christianity had penetrated north of the Danube into Dacia Carpatica. The existence of Christian Latin terms in the early Rumanian language in the time of the Romanisation of the Thraco-Geto-Dacian population is a powerful argument in support of the view that Christianity spread to this region at an early date. The use of the Latin language was widespread in the early fourth century both South and North of the Danube. Greek words of Christian significance entered the Rumanian language through the intermediary role of Latin during the period of Christianisation.

CHAPTER 6

THE NEGOTIATIONS

The Western and Eastern leaders came to Serdica with no agreed agenda although the orthodox were clear as to the aims of the Council. The fact that they got through so much business, including the promulgation of at least twenty Canons, pre-supposes much preliminary work on their part, probably carried out by Julius, Athanasius, Ossius, Maximin and perhaps others. In their letter to Julius, sent from Serdica, the Western Council state that they had three aims: to examine afresh disputed matters (1) concerning the holy faith and the integrity of truth; (2) concerning the persons deposed by unfair judgement; and (3) concerning the re-establishment of jurisdictional order in the Church.¹ Thus, for the Westerns, theological as well as jurisdictional matters were at stake and had to be resolved if the Church was not to go into permanent schism. The Westerns were strongly influenced by Athanasius' view that the Eastern bishops were Arian **in toto**, which was untrue. But we should not assume that the Western leaders had in mind the Nicene Creed and the **homoousios** when they referred to **de sancta fide et de integritate veritatis**. Even the Creed which they issued from the Council had no mention of the **Nicaenum**, although Ossius reassured Julius that it was not intended to replace the Nicene symbol. Similarly the Easterns did not controvert the **Nicaenum** in their Encyclical and indeed expanded the Nicene anathemas in their adoption of the Fourth Creed associated with the Dedication Council of 341.² What was at stake for the Westerns was adoption of Arianism, notwithstanding the fact that Arius had been re-admitted to the Church and that the Eastern Creeds represented the conservative theology of a large group of Eastern bishops which was pre-Nicene in outlook. The Western leadership equated the theology of a few leading Eastern bishops with that of the whole Eastern episcopate.

However the main *raison d'être* of the Council was the question of the deposed bishops Athanasius, Marcellus and their fellows. Throughout the Empire Christian communities had become divided into two camps — as to whether they supported the deposed prelates or not. This was a major issue which struck at the very heart of Church unity. The Eastern bishops repeatedly refer to the basic rule that to hold communion with a bishop excommunicated by a legitimate Council was to incur oneself the penalty of excommunication.³ So unity between West and East was impossible so long as one group was in communion with Athanasius and Marcellus while the other upheld the sentence of deposition. The way out

of this impasse could only lie in a general Council which would not pre-judge the issue but fully and impartially examine it again and come to an agreed decision acceptable to all. The issue for the Eastern bishops was clear cut: the deposed bishops were excommunicate until formally re-admitted to communion, therefore Athanasius and the others ought not to have come to Serdica and, above all, ought not to be seen to be in communion with Ossius and the Westerns. On the other hand the orthodox believed that the Council of Rome of 341 had lawfully re-admitted the bishops to communion and that therefore the latter were quite justified in being present at Serdica. On this rock the negotiations at Serdica foundered. As long as the Easterns did not recognise Western Councils and as long as the Westerns continued to invite the Easterns to a 'trial' there was little hope of progress. It is unlikely that the Easterns would have come to Serdica at all without an explicit order from the Emperors. In their Encyclical they complain constantly of the long journey from distant provinces, the hardship involved, the fact that some of their bishops were old, weak and sick, their congregations were deserted and minor officials had to care for them, the population of East and West was being shaken up, the **cursus publicus** was being wrecked, and all for the sake of wicked men, long condemned, seeking power for themselves.⁴ Behind these complaints was a reluctance to have the decisions of Eastern Councils reconsidered with Western bishops present, fear of a Western 'papacy', and the knowledge that they would probably be outvoted. In this the Easterns may have thought that more Western bishops would attend than, in fact, happened. Moreover the initiative for the Council had come from the Western Emperor, Constans, who supported Athanasius' cause and the Easterns could not but be aware that Serdica was inside his domain. They feared the worst and their progress towards Serdica was slow and halting.

The Eastern bishops stopped en route and held meetings to plan their course of action. One of these stops may have been at Pizus, between Adrianopolis and Philippopolis, and south of Beroe, which was founded in 202 A. D. as a market town (ἐμπόρια) to supply the needs of those travelling by the public post.⁵ The last and most important of these halts was however at Philippopolis about one-hundred-and-twenty km from Serdica. The city was originally a penal settlement called by the natives 'Pulpudeva', 'Philip's town', after Philip of Macedon who had colonised Thrace in 342 B. C. and the years following. The Romans renamed the city Trimontium but the name Philippopolis remained in use, like the Greek language. Under Diocletian the city began to issue coins and in the reign of Marcus Aurelius a new wall, enclosing a larger area, was constructed. Marcus' walls enclosed a circuit of three-and-a-half km. - five times the contemporary fortified area of Serdica - and an impressive witness to the city's importance.⁶ Septimius Severus conferred on it the title **metropolis** in 196 A. D. After the Gothic invasion in the third century the city slowly recovered, benefitting from Diocletian's administrative re-organisation, and in the fourth century it was of considerable affluence

and importance perhaps having a population of one hundred thousand people.⁷ It was the chief city of Thrace.

When the Eastern bishops reached Philippopolis, perhaps in late-August 343, they would have been met by Eutychius the bishop, an Eastern supporter, and possibly joined by others such as Demophilus, bishop of Beroe and Narcissus, bishop of Irenopolis. The Eastern group, now numbering nearly eighty, may have stayed several days or more in the city before proceeding to Serdica. This is proved by the fact that they exchanged letters with the Orthodox bishops who had already arrived in Serdica. Where the Eastern bishops stayed cannot now be determined with certainty. It is possible that they planned their course of action in the open air - the temperature in Plovdiv can reach 32°—38°C. in August - there are other instances of Church gatherings being held in the open. Another and weightier possibility is that they stayed on the acropolis of the city where a Roman gate (Hissarkapija) still survives from the fifth or sixth century A. D. On this site a Church dedicated to Helena, Constantine's mother, existed in the fourth century which had been built on the site of an earlier pagan temple dedicated to Demeter (fig. 5). Around this site were small palaces, imperial and other buildings where the wealthy lived. The acropolis, being high up, was cooler than in the city in summer which is a factor which should not be neglected by the historian. It is possible that the Eastern bishops were accommodated in some imperial buildings in this area and here they planned their tactics in regard to the Western gathering which had already assembled in Serdica. The use of this site could have been obtained through the imperial counts who accompanied the party or through the bishop of Philippopolis, who was an important figure in the fourth century as is shown by an inscription now in the forum on which he is described as a metropolitan.⁸

The Letter of the Orthodox Council to the Alexandrian Church and to the Egyptian episcopate states that when Athanasius came to Serdica the Eastern bishops were informed of the fact by letter and by personal messages and were invited to be present.⁹ Sozomen appears to record the answer:

'The bishops of the East, who had previously assembled at Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, wrote to the bishops of the West, who had already assembled at Serdica, that they would not join them, unless they would eject the followers of Athanasius from their assembly, and from communion with them, because they had been deposed. They afterwards went to Serdica, but declared they would not enter the Church, while these who had been deposed by them were admitted thither'.¹⁰

The reason why they eventually made the journey to Serdica is given in Festal **Index** 15,¹¹ although the passage (extant only in Syriac) is not quite clear: Apparently Count Philagrius, an ex-prefect of Egypt and a long-standing opponent of Athanasius, told them that they would weaken their case and offend Constans, the Western Emperor, if they did not appear. The two defectors to the West, Asterius and Arius, also gave their version

of what had happened. The Easterns agreed to make a formal appearance at Serdica, but no more, certainly not to attend the Council. Many of the Eastern bishops adhered to a moderate orthodoxy but were kept in check by the Eastern leaders.¹² Although this is an *ex parte* account, and the witness of defectors is to be received with caution, the fact that the Eastern group were shut up in the imperial palace on their arrival in Serdica suggests that there was an element of truth in the defectors' view. The Eastern Encyclical shows, too, that the Eastern leaders required as a condition for their presence, the expulsion of Athanasius, Marcellus and the other bishops, and to this the Orthodox could not agree. But whether a large body of Eastern bishops would have been prepared to attend the Western assembly without the hand of their leaders upon them, as the defectors assert, is difficult to say. It was, in any event, a somewhat reluctant body of men who journeyed through the long Souki pass on their way from Philippopolis to Serdica.

On their arrival the Eastern bishops went straight to the imperial residence, already negotiated as their headquarters beforehand. Here they obtained confirmation that the deposed bishops were present with Ossius and Protogenes and, even worse, were partaking of the eucharist.¹³ Moreover the Westerns had with them an unruly crowd of supporters — 'criminals and evil passers-by' who had streamed into Serdica from Constantinople and Alexandria 'among them those who had been accused of murder, bloodshed, slaughter, robbery, plundering, pillage and all kinds of evil sacrilegious crimes'.¹⁴ Ossius and Protogenes assembled them in their own meeting place - probably the civil building near the S. George Rotunda. Thus far the Eastern Encyclical. The Easterns likewise had their supporters, in addition to the presence of the two imperial counts Musonianus and Hesychius, Philagrius apparently remaining behind in Philippopolis. In a cryptic phrase Athanasius states that the Easterns brought with them instructors (παιδαγωγού) and supporters (συνηγόροι).¹⁵ He suggests that these persons were engaged in intimidation, i.e. they were adept at whipping up support for the Eastern cause much as 'cheer leaders' whip up support for sports' teams today. The Eastern Encyclical refers to rioting and shouting of comments by crowds accompanying the Western bishops which was no doubt reciprocated. The Westerns also brought with them alleged victims of Eastern oppression. Chains and irons used for torture were shown, kinsmen and friends of the exiled or dead appeared, bishops were produced who had been persecuted - one with the irons and chains which he had worn, some showed sword wounds and others complained that they were starved through the Eastern machinations. A sorry tale of violation of virgins and of Churches burnt was rehearsed.¹⁶ While allowance must be made for exaggeration there can be little doubt that both sides had engaged in oppression of opponents and both had unruly elements present with them. A long legacy of hatred lay behind the Council and was not the least cause of the inability of each side to understand the position of the other.

How long the Eastern bishops stayed in the imperial residence is

impossible to say but this must have been some days to allow time for the negotiations and for the composition of the Eastern Encyclical. Athanasius says that the Eastern leaders thought up an excuse in order to flee rather than remain and be condemned.¹⁷ The real reason had already been decided on at Philippopolis, viz. their belief that Western bishops could not over-rule the lawful decisions of Eastern Councils. To hold communion with Athanasius and his fellow bishops was impossible and so, unless the Westerns first excluded them from the Council, the Easterns could not attend. Moreover the constantly renewed Western invitation to take part in a new 'trial' was unacceptable. The Westerns, on the other hand, could not understand the Easterns' ignoring of the decisions of the Council of Rome of 341, nor the Eastern request that Athanasius and his fellow bishops be considered guilty, which was pre-judging the issue. It is possible that Eastern objections might have been placated if Athanasius and Marcellus had stayed away from Serdica. But by 343 Athanasius had so won over the West to the rightness of his cause that that was impossible.

Several attempts were made by the Western bishops, led by Ossius, to persuade the Easterns to change their minds for the sake of the Unity of the Church - but to no avail.¹⁸ Five of the six bishops who had been members of the committee of enquiry which went to Alexandria at the behest of the Council of Tyre in 335 were present among the Eastern delegation and they now came forward with a counter proposal. Each side, they argued, should appoint a number of bishops to visit the places where Athanasius had committed his crimes, make a full enquiry and report back to the Council which would then be bound by its findings.¹⁹ This proposal was hardly disinterested as the Easterns knew that, with Gregory as bishop and an anti-Athanasian prefect in office, the chances were that the committee would return from Alexandria with the same decision as the first enquiry produced eight years before - or with disagreement among themselves. It was thus a clever move which put the onus on the Westerns who could then be accused of an inability to face the truth if they refused the suggestion. If accepted there would, in any event, be a long delay which could well lead to the Council disintegrating.²⁰ Moreover the documents concerning the *cause célèbre* were in possession of the Council and witnesses on either side were present. So the Westerns turned down this adroit Eastern suggestion.

Ossius then made a proposal, which he mentions in his letter to Constantius,²¹ inviting 'the enemies of Athanasius' to come to the Church where he abode, i.e. either to S. Sophia or some other early Christian basilica where, with Protogenes, he officiated at the eucharist. Ossius says he repeatedly invited the Eastern leaders to appear before him alone and to declare if they had anything against Athanasius. If proved guilty Athanasius would be rejected by the West. De Clercq states that 'no better proof could be given of the earnest desire of Ossius and Athanasius to attain a peaceful solution of the East-West controversy than this astonishing proposal.'²² This however is not obvious as Ossius was setting himself up as judge and as he was already committed wholeheartedly to

Athanasius' cause one can hardly blame the Easterns for being very wary of the invitation. What was needed was the presence of a person not committed to either side who would examine the case afresh, including the evidence that many of the accusations against Athanasius had been proved to be false. A Constantine was sadly needed at Serdica and it was perhaps a tragedy that the Western party was, in this matter, too much under the influence of Athanasius. It is also not without significance that Ossius was a Spaniard and unsympathetic to the subtleties of Eastern thought. As it was his repeated proposal that the Easterns should appear before him alone was bound to be rejected as tantamount to Ossius being accuser and judge in his own cause.

The belief that the Eastern leaders held the majority of the eighty bishops on a tight rein and shut them up in the imperial residence during their stay in Serdica should perhaps be accepted only with caution. The sources show considerable contacts between the two bodies and their supporters. It is true that a large number of Eastern bishops were, in theology, moderate conservatives but this did not make them pro-Athanasian. While there were two defections from the East (as there were from the West) we should be unwise to assume that the Easterns would have defected *en masse* if their leaders relaxed their hold on them. Probably most were only too pleased to leave Serdica and return home from a journey that many did not wish to make in the first place.

The decision of the Easterns to depart from Serdica was announced to the Westerns through Eustathius, a Serdica presbyter,²³ who was perhaps involved in the negotiations as an assistant to Protogenes. If he had been strongly pro-Eastern it is unlikely that Athanasius would have missed an opportunity to lambast him. Ossius made one last, forlorn effort to persuade the Easterns which adequately reveals his lack of knowledge of Eastern psychology: 'Either come forward and answer the charges which are brought against you, for the false accusations which you have made against others, or know that the Council will condemn you as guilty, and declare Athanasius and his fellows free and clear from all blame.'²⁴ According to Athanasius Ossius wrote to the Easterns, no doubt either while they were still at Serdica or when they had returned and halted at Philippopolis. This message met with no response as, according to Hilary, they departed by night²⁵ although hardly because of the alarms of conscience or because of the sight of injured Westerns, as Athanasius asserts. According to Athanasius the Easterns gave as a pretext for their departure the fact that Constantius had written to them news of his victory over the Persians. It is significant that the Emperor, in the midst of battles, could write to the Eastern group and it is possible that he had been kept closely informed of the proceedings and ordered the Easterns to withdraw, notwithstanding his having agreed with Constans the calling of the Council. His hostile action against Western supporters at Adrianopolis, shortly after the Council, suggests that he was playing a double game vis-à-vis the West. Imperial influence on Church Councils was very strong in the fourth and fifth centuries and, in one sense, Western Serdica is the ex-

ception which proves the rule. It is also worth noting that, just before the time of Serdica, Constantius had exempted Eastern clergy from taxes which, since Diocletian's reign, had to be paid in kind. This was a considerable favour to the Christians.

Before their departure the Easterns took some important decisions and we are thus justified in speaking of an Eastern Council of Serdica. Sozomen accurately summarises the work of this Council from the account of Sabinus:

'After they had convened separately, they brought forward opposite decisions; for the Eastern bishops confirmed the sentences they had already enacted against Athanasius, Paul, Marcellus and Asclepas, and deposed Julius, bishop of Rome, because he had been the first to admit those who had been condemned by them, into communion; and Ossius, the confessor, was also deposed, partly for the same reason, and partly because he was the friend of Paulinus and Eustathius,²⁶ rulers of the Church in Antioch. Maximin, bishop of Trèves, was deposed, because he had been among the first who had received Paul into communion, and had been the cause of his returning to Constantinople, and because he had excluded from communion the Eastern bishops who had repaired to Gaul. Besides the above, they likewise deposed Protogenes, bishop of Serdica, and Gaudentius; the one because he favoured Marcellus, although he had previously condemned him, and the other because he had adopted a different line of conduct from that of Cyriacus, his predecessor, and had supported many individuals then deposed by them. After issuing these sentences, they made known to the bishops in every region, that they were not to hold communion with those who were deposed, and that they were not to write to them, nor to receive letters from them. They likewise commanded them to believe what was said concerning God in the formulary which they subjoined to their letter, and in which no mention was made of the term 'consubstantial', but in which, those were excommunicated who said there are three Gods, or that Christ is not God, or that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same, or that the Son is unbegotten, or that there was a time or age in which He did not exist.'²⁶

Sozomen is here summarizing the decisions of the Eastern Council embodied in their Encyclical which we will consider in detail later. He also mentions the Creed which the Eastern bishops subjoined to their letter - substantially identical with the Fourth Creed associated with the Dedication Council of 341. The only decision he does not mention is that on Easter taken by the assembly which is embodied in **Collectio Theodosii diaconi** and which contains a thirty-year paschal cycle adopted by the Eastern Council. We will also discuss these later.²⁷

There has been a divergence of opinion among scholars as to where the Eastern bishops promulgated their decisions. Some scholars speak of the 'Counter Council of Philippopolis'²⁸ in this following the account in

Socrates **H E** 2,20 and an enigmatic reference in **Index** 15 to Athanasius' **Festal Letters**. However Sozomen **H E** 3,11 corrects Socrates' account in many places and the **Index** merely states that the bishops returned to Philippopolis, without saying that they held a formal Council there. On the other hand there are weighty indications that the Eastern Council was, in fact, held in Serdica before the bishops left for Philippopolis. Whenever Hilary mentions the Encyclical letter or creed of the Eastern bishops he refers to them as specifically promulgated at Serdica.²⁹ Neither Athanasius nor Hilary refer to any separate Council held in Philippopolis. And more significant the bishops themselves declare that they had decided to write from Serdica and to declare their decisions.³⁰ This cannot be a later attempt to prove that they were the legitimate Council as it would have laid them open to criticism by the Westerns. Rather the bishops' own statement is proof that their Encyclical was drawn up at Serdica before their departure, and as the Creed was attached to this we must presume that all their decisions were made in Serdica, not in Philippopolis. This presupposes at least a week, probably more, was spent by the Easterns in the Dacian capital. There are no direct allusions in the Eastern Encyclical to Western decisions, as some older scholars thought, beyond what was common knowledge, which would require a later date. It is however unlikely that the Easterns could have circulated their decisions from Serdica, which was in Constans' territory, and it seems to me more likely that they despatched their Encyclical, addressed to specific individuals, from Philippopolis on their return there. They were now in Constantius' domain and could use the normal postal service. It may be that this was the cause of confusion as to the place of the Eastern Council.

We possess little information about the progress of the Eastern group as they returned from Philippopolis to their sees, apart from Athanasius' account of what happened in Adrianopolis, almost halfway between Philippopolis and Constantinople. The Christian populace here supported the Orthodox cause at Serdica and Lucius, their bishop, had attended the Western Council. The Eastern bishops complained to Constantius that the people of Adrianopolis would not have communion with them, as they passed through the city and, as a result, the Emperor ordered a sharp persecution; ten laity were beheaded, and Athanasius claims to have seen their tombs, probably on his way back to Alexandria in 346. Count Philagrius, who had been at Philippopolis (although not at Serdica) earlier was now with the Eastern party and 'assisted their design in this matter also'.³¹ This incident shows that Constantius was unimpressed by the Western bishops' demands that pro-Western Churches in the East should have their 'freedom'. He was only rather grudgingly to acquiesce in a measure of freedom for the exiled Alexandrian clergy. His action at Adrianopolis reveals a rough streak in his character akin to the savagery the Emperor showed (on the most plausible reading of the evidence) towards the Constantinian court on, or soon after, 9 September 337.

CHAPTER 7

THE WESTERN ORTHODOX COUNCIL

Sozomen states that after Serdica 'the Eastern and Western Churches ceased to maintain the intercourse which usually exists among people of the same faith, and refrained from holding communion with each other'.¹ Socrates states more laconically: 'From that time, therefore, the Western Church was severed from the Eastern; and the boundary of communion between them was the mountain called Soucis, which divides the Illyrians from the Thracians'.² In fact ever since the Council of Tyre in 335 communion had, in practice, been severed as Athanasius built up his position in the West. According to De Clercq the withdrawal of the Eastern episcopate from Serdica not only succeeded in destroying the ecumenical character of the Council but doomed to failure any subsequent attempt to restore unity between the two halves of Christendom.³ This is however an over simplification and equally, one could argue, the presence of Athanasius and Marcellus at Serdica, and their **de facto** acceptance by the Westerns, led inevitably to the Eastern withdrawal on the grounds that the case had been pre-judged by the West.

The Westerns had arrived at Serdica with a long agenda which went far beyond the issue of the deposed bishops, and they were determined to press on with this under the presidency of Ossius who had been appointed to this office by Constans. After the Eastern withdrawal they therefore continued their business in the civil building near the Rotunda, now undisturbed by unruly elements and free from the necessity of sending constant messages to the imperial residence where the Eastern episcopate resided. They could now concentrate on their pre-determined agenda. Perhaps conscious of Eastern criticism and aware that Athanasius had made the mistake of not having a Council convened to re-admit him to the see of Alexandria in 338 they considered afresh the question of the deposed bishops. In their Encyclical which they later drew up they state that as the Easterns had run away they were quite justified in dismissing the case against Athanasius and the other bishops yet 'that they may not devise means of practising a further mischief in consequence of their flight, we have considered it advisable to examine the part they have played according to the principles of truth'.⁴ So the Western Council went over, once again, the charges made against the bishops and came to an agreed judgement, repeating the process gone through at the Council of Rome early in 341 and again with Eastern representatives absent. The Western Council dealt first with the case against Athanasius, unlike the Easterns

who, in their Encyclical, considered the case against Marcellus first. Surprisingly the Westerns made no direct reference to the Council of Tyre but the charges against Athanasius made there and repeated constantly since by the Easterns can be reconstructed with a fair degree of accuracy. He was charged with sacrilege, with breaking a sacred chalice and so profaning the holy mysteries; he had, it was alleged, smashed the altar and torn down the Church while Ischyrras, a presbyter, was celebrating the eucharist; he had thrown into prison Ischyrras and other Meletian bishops and clergy, had them tortured and even put to death with the help of the authorities; he had moreover forced unwilling laymen to communicate by threats and tortures.⁵ The Council concentrated on the Ischyrras affair which was the main plank of the Eastern case against Athanasius. The facts appear to be as follows:

Ischyrras had been ordained a presbyter by Colluthus but his ordination had been pronounced invalid by an Alexandrian Council in 324, at which Ossius had been present. In spite of this he continued to minister in the village where he lived (**Irene Secontaruri**) and he used, as a place of worship, a cottage inhabited by a child; only seven people and his own relatives attended the services of his breakaway group. Athanasius, on a visitation, heard of Ischyrras and sent Macarius, one of his clergy, to find out more and to summon Ischyrras to account for his behaviour. Macarius found Ischyrras ill in bed and urged his father to dissuade him from persisting in his faction but instead Ischyrras linked up with the Meletians, who were a powerful 'Church of the Martyrs' in Egypt. Ischyrras apparently claimed that Macarius had violently broken his chalice and the Meletians told this story to Eusebius of Nicomedia, the Arian leader. The story now develops along the lines of folk-memory. Ischyrras, it was said, was celebrating the eucharist when Macarius burst in, broke the chalice, and upset the altar and the Emperor Constantine heard this version of the story when Athanasius was at Nicomedia. However Ischyrras recanted, at the instance of his relatives, and made a written statement that the story was false and had been extracted from him by threats. Athanasius, who had this written recantation, placed Ischyrras under censure, although he forgave him; however Ischyrras proved to be of unstable character and began to renew the charges against Athanasius and Macarius with increasing venom. Athanasius (not Macarius) was now accused of breaking the chalice and in the Eastern Encyclical drawn up at Serdica, Athanasius causes to be thrown down Ischyrras' 'church', not his 'cottage'.⁶ The records of the committee of enquiry set up by the Council of Tyre were available at Serdica and Athanasius was fully prepared to defend himself.⁷ The six members of the committee were his avowed enemies, five of them having come to Serdica with the Eastern group; no witnesses for the defence had been allowed at Tyre, only heathens and catechumens whose evidence was suspect as they could not have witnessed the sacred mysteries to which only baptized Christians were admitted.⁸ Several Egyptian clergy, who had come to Serdica or who had provided written evidence, testified that the committee's conclusions were false. And two Alexandrian presbyters who

were ex-Meletians (Athanasius was always adroit at using former Meletians) testified that Ischyrras was not a presbyter of Meletius and that there was no Meletian community in the neighbourhood of Mareotis, a district of Alexandria.⁹ Ossius, now, testified that Ischyrras' ordination had been declared invalid at the 324 Council which he had attended. And if Ischyrras had never been validly ordained how could there be sacrilege or profanation by Macarius and Athanasius? The letter of recantation written by Ischyrras clearly established Athanasius' innocence.¹⁰ The Western Council thus had no difficulty in dismissing the charges against Athanasius in the Ischyrras affair as false — notwithstanding the evidence from the papyri that Athanasius used strong-arm methods against the Meletians.¹¹ The Ischyrras affair was the weakest of the Eastern accusations against Athanasius and it was a pity that he did not stay away from Serdica and allow this cause célèbre to be investigated independently by others in the presence of the Eastern bishops. It was one of the strongest weapons in Athanasius' armoury. As Ischyrras, now a 'bishop', was apparently a member of the Eastern group at Serdica his vaccillations could have been exposed in his presence.

The Western Council then went on to investigate the accusations brought against Athanasius concerning the Meletian bishop, Arsenius, notwithstanding the fact that, by 343, the Easterns had dropped the affair and so, tacitly, admitted Athanasius was in the right. Arsenius was Meletian bishop of Hypsele who, it was said, had bribed John Arcaph, the Meletian leader, to go into hiding among the Meletian monks of the Thebaid. Athanasius was alleged to have had Arsenius murdered and to have used his hand for magical purposes. Constantine was informed about this at the same time as the Ischyrras scandal and he ordered his half-brother to enquire into the case. Athanasius was then summoned to appear before a Council in Caesarea in 334, which had Eusebius of Caesarea as its president, but he refused to appear. Accordingly a Council was fixed for Tyre in 335 where Count Dionysius would represent Constantine and to which Athanasius was to be forced to come. Meanwhile however Athanasius sent a deacon in search of Arsenius and he was found in a monastery in the Antaeopolis nome in Upper Egypt. Arsenius was smuggled out and presented at Tyre.¹² The accusers then claimed that Arsenius had been mutilated and that Athanasius had burnt his house and imprisoned and ill-treated him.¹³ These accusations were disproved and Constantine wrote to Athanasius expressing his indignation at the plot.¹⁴ All this was past history by 343 yet the Westerns dutifully rehearse it and declare Athanasius innocent. The other charges against Athanasius, listed in the Eastern Encyclical, concerning 'persecution of innocent brethren', the looting of Alexandrian basilicas, the breaking in pieces an altar and so on are not mentioned by the Western assembly,¹⁵ either because they were best forgotten or summarily dismissed. The Council then considered the cases of the Alexandrian presbyters Aphthonius, Athanasius son of Capito, Paul and Plutio who had either fled or been exiled through Eastern persecution. They were declared acquitted and received into communion.¹⁶

At the close of the investigation Athanasius and his fellows, who had throughout answered verbally the charges against them, were declared 'innocent, and free from all blame, and their opponents to be calumniators, evil-doers, and everything rather than Christians. Accordingly they were dismissed in peace'.¹⁷

The Council then went on to consider the case of Marcellus of Ancyra who, like Athanasius, was present and able to answer verbally to the charges which had been brought against him. We have already underlined the importance of Marcellus in the events which led up to the Council.¹⁸ His strong anti-Arian stand at the Council of Nicaea had stood him in good stead, notwithstanding the dubious nature of his theology. His arrival in Rome in 340 inexorably involved the West in the question of his theological position. As we have seen Julius, bishop of Rome, accepted Marcellus as orthodox and referred to both Athanasius and him as 'our brothers'. Marcellus had presented to Julius a creed, probably identical with the contemporary Roman baptismal creed, and this was sufficient to obtain Julius' good will, although this creed was not appealed to at Serdica. We have argued that Marcellus was an arch-trimmer adept at facing both ways and that he duped Julius. The East had no illusions about him and all the Creeds associated with the Dedication Council at Antioch of 341 are strongly anti-Marcellian and none more than the Fourth Creed which, otherwise, is the most conciliatory.¹⁹ At the Western Council of Serdica instead of Marcellus' creed a book of his was read which apparently Eusebius of Caesarea had maligned:

'The book of our fellow-minister Marcellus was also read, by which the fraud of Eusebius and his fellows was plainly discovered. For what Marcellus had advanced by way of enquiry, they falsely represented as his professed opinion; but when the subsequent parts of the book were read, and the parts preceding the queries themselves, his faith was found to be correct. He had never pretended, as they positively affirmed, that the Word of God had His beginning from Holy Mary, nor that His Kingdom had an end; on the contrary he had written that His Kingdom was both without beginning and without end'.²⁰

Hilary also states that his examination of the book bore out this opinion and adds that Marcellus was never again tried or condemned at any later Council.²¹ The reference to this book is significant; it is not to be equated with the statement of Marcellus' faith containing the Old Roman Creed preserved by Epiphanius - notwithstanding Athanasius' later statement that no Council approved this.²² It seems probable that Marcellus himself put the book into the hands of the Western bishops at Serdica perhaps realising that something more than the production of a creed was needed to clear him of the taint of heresy. According to Hilary Marcellus subsequently fell into heresy through rash utterances,²³ although what these utterances were we do not know. It is possible that these included the statement that the Word of God did not become Son until the Incarnation²⁴ and that Christ's Lordship would one day be terminated, i.e. an

expansionist modalism by which the divine Monad expands into a Triad and eventually returns to its original Unity. But at Serdica Marcellus, according to the Westerns, put forward these ideas as questions worth discussing, rather than as his own opinions. Once more he had trimmed his sails to the prevailing winds. On the basis of his explanation Marcellus was declared innocent by the Western Church of the charges against him.

The Easterns however were not taken in by Marcellus' vacillations and in their Encyclical they devote a large space to Marcellus and his theology giving this pride of place before Athanasius' case is considered. They give Marcellus short shrift:

'For there existed in our time a certain Marcellus of Galatia, a more accursed pest than all heretics, and the type of man who by his sacrilegious mind, profane tongue and evil argument wanted to bring to an end the uninterrupted Kingdom of our Lord Christ, which is eternal and timeless, by claiming that the Lord had received the beginning of his reign four hundred years before and that its end would come at the same time as the fall of the world And he conflates his assertions with a type of foulness, now with the false beliefs of Sabellius, now with the wickedness of Paul of Samosata, now with the blasphemies of Montanus, the leader of all the heretics'.²⁵

The Encyclical goes on to make a telling point when it states caustically that Protogenes, bishop of Serdica and host to the Western Council, and Cyriacus of Naissus, had once written a book against Marcellus — yet now they are supporting him. It was, of course, a theological simplification to equate Marcellus' teaching with Sabellianism. Marcellus was certainly a subtle, flexible thinker, as M. Tetz has shown,²⁶ and it appears unlikely that many of the Eastern bishops, any more than many of the Westerns, understood his position. However the Encyclical of the Eastern Council clearly reveals that Marcellus was a major bone of contention between East and West and his presence at the Western Council partaking of the divine mysteries a serious affront.²⁷ Again the West had pre-judged the issue and would have been wiser to have excluded Marcellus from their assembly until his case had been fully re-considered. It is significant that the Creed which the Western bishops were to attach to their Encyclical refutes, for the first time in the West, some aspects of Marcellus' teachings which suggests that some Eastern criticisms had struck home. Likewise the Eastern bishops at Serdica, in adopting the Fourth Creed of Antioch, added anathemas which went further in condemning specific positions of Marcellus.²⁸ But at the Western Council Marcellus' endorsement by the Council of Rome of 341, and the fact that he was present and already **de facto** in communion with Western bishops, could only lead to a declaration of his innocence. The too uncritical acceptance of his views without searching enquiry is yet another example of the influence of human personality in the period of the early Church. Later Athanasius, who was close to Marcellus at an earlier period, came to have doubts about him and the West largely dropped his cause after Serdica although his com-

munity at Ancyra continued to stand behind their aged bishop in his later years. Western doubts about Marcellus came too late to lessen the divisions between West and East.

The Council then went on to consider the case of a third deposed bishop, Asclepas of Gaza who, it was alleged, had shattered an altar, instigated riots and had held communion with Paul of Constantinople.²⁹ Asclepas had been deposed at a Council of Antioch in 326, at the same time as Eustathius, and had apparently sought to reestablish his position. At the Council letters of a certain Theognius were read which had been written to the Emperors in the hope of biassing them against Asclepas and the others, but deacons of Theognius proved that these were forged.³⁰ Asclepas himself then produced 'reports which had been drawn up at Antioch in the presence of his accusers and Eusebius of Caesarea, and proved that he was innocent by the declarations of the Bishops who judged his cause'.³¹ Sozomen goes further and states that Asclepas had been re-established in his diocese by the vote of Eusebius and many other judges.³² These reports, like the letters of Theognius, must have been read in Greek to the Western assembly although Latin translations would have been required for the non-Greek speakers. The Council then declared Asclepas innocent of the charges against him. Sozomen³³ states that the Council also declared Lucius of Adrianopolis acquitted because his accusers had fled but in the Western Encyclicals there is no mention of his case; the Eastern Encyclical, on the other hand, associates him with Asclepas and Paul of Constantinople.³⁴ The Council had in fact no need to acquit him formally as he was still holder of the see of Adrianopolis. After the Council the Easterns continued their campaign of persecution against Lucius enlisting Constantius' aid, and succeeded in getting him tortured and exiled where he died.³⁵ Certainly the Easterns stirred up trouble at Adrianopolis both before and after Serdica.

More surprising than the omission of any reference to Lucius is the failure of the Western Council to mention the case of Eustathius of Antioch, a more important figure than Asclepas with whom he was deposed c. 326. Recent study has emphasised the doctrinal significance of Eustathius as a representative of the Logos-man type of Christology and an intrepid opponent of the Arian Logos-sarx framework.³⁶ There are clear contacts between Marcellus and Eustathius yet the Council ignored the latter. The Eastern Encyclical describes Ossius as a 'dear friend' of Eustathius³⁷ yet the President of the Council made no attempt to defend or rehabilitate him. It is possible that Eustathius had died some years before Serdica and so his rehabilitation was not a pressing issue in 343. However there is no certain evidence of the date of his death. As we have seen E. Schwartz argued that he was a fanatical follower of bishop Alexander of Alexandria, the main opponent of Arius, and was still alive in the late-340's, if a fragment of the **Sermo de Fide**, attributed to Athanasius and to be dated c. 345-50, really belongs to him.³⁸ If this identification were accepted the Orthodox silence at Serdica could only mean that he was by then under a cloud and that some Eastern accusations against him had stuck. However

the silence of the Western Council is, in any event, surprising in view of Eustathius' doctrinal significance.

Socrates³⁹ states that Paul of Constantinople was re-instated by the Western Council but there is no evidence to support this. His case is not even mentioned by the Orthodox assembly and we have argued,⁴⁰ in considering W. Telfer's theory as to the date of the Council, that by 343 Paul's case was considered as closed and his second condemnation regarded as an event of the past. On the other hand the Eastern Encyclical gives an adverse picture of Paul and blackens his character - no doubt because Constantinople was a see of strategic importance for the East which it was essential to retain in 'sound' hands. There is also the possibility that, for the West, Paul's guilt had been established and so no-one dared defend him at the Orthodox Council. Although he had once held communion with Western bishops that was now finished. So he drops out of sight — a fate which was also later to befall the more significant figure of Marcellus.

The Western Council concluded this part of its deliberations by solemnly writing to the dioceses of each of the deposed bishops, Athanasius, Marcellus and Asclepas declaring their innocence and asking the Christian populace in each city to esteem them as bishops and to expect their coming.⁴¹ Then the Council excommunicated Gregory of Alexandria, Basil of Ancyra and Quintianus of Gaza and decreed that they no longer held the office of bishop and no-one should hold communion with them, or receive letters from them. The leaders of the Eastern delegation at Serdica were then deposed from the episcopate, viz. Theodore, Narcissus, Acacius, Stephen, Ursacius, Valens, Menophantes - also George of Laodicea, who was not present at Serdica, on the grounds that Alexander had deposed him and that he was connected with the 'Arian madness'.⁴² Thus concluded the first part of the proceedings of the Orthodox Council which were mainly jurisdictional in nature, although theological issues lay not far below the surface as in the case of Marcellus. The Council could now proceed with questions **de fide**.

CHAPTER 8

THE ENCYCLICALS

The Western Council sent out several letters, either addressed to all the Churches or to specific Churches or individuals, informing them of the decisions. It is likely that stenographic records were taken of the debates, which was a normal procedure,¹ and that these were used as a basis for drawing up the Encyclicals. We must assume that this was done while the bishops were still at Serdica in view of the signatures attached to certain of the letters. However the numbers of bishops signing the various versions differ and it is possible that, after the signing of the main letter to all the Churches, some bishops had left Serdica before the other versions were signed. And there is also the possibility that textual corruption has affected the transmission of the lists.

A. The main Encyclical Letter: this is addressed to all the Churches and gives a summary of the preliminary moves to the calling of the Council, including a note concerning Julius' abortive invitation to the Easterns to come to Rome, followed by an account of the arrival of the Eastern bishops and their refusal to come to a 'trial', their secession and 'flight' from Serdica; proof of the persecution by the Easterns was provided by 'chains and irons' which were shown to the assembly; then a lengthy report on the cases of Athanasius, Marcellus and Asclepas was given with the reasons for their acquittal and innocence; finally the Churches are exhorted not to hold communion with the Eastern leaders who have been deposed from the episcopate. This letter has been preserved by four sources which appear to be independent:

1. Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos* 42.1 — 50.3 (H. G. Opitz, *Athanasius, Werke* Bd. 2 Lfg. 4, 119-32) This Greek version has, as its closing formula: Ὅσιος ἐπισκοπος ὑπέγραψα, καὶ οὕτω πάντες. In its present form the letter contains seventy-eight signatures and there are a further two hundred and six, not present at Serdica, who signed later. There is no creed attached to the letter.

2. Hilary, *Collectanea Antiariana Parisina* Series B.II. 1-8 (CSEL 65, 103-126) This Latin version has no list of signatories and no formulary of faith is attached to it.

3. Theodoret, **Historia Ecclesiastica** 2, 8.1-36 (GCS 44, Theodoret **Kirchengeschichte** ed. L. Parmentier and F. Scheidweiler, Berlin (1954) (101-112). This has no list of signatories although it contains a version of the Western Creed.

4. **Collectio Theodosii Diaconi, Codex Verona LX** edited C. H. Turner, **Monumenta** 1, 2, 645-653. This has the Encyclical letter, in a defective Latin translation, followed by the Creed, but contains no list of signatories. The text shows contacts with the version of Theodoret.

We know that between ninety-five and one hundred bishops attended the Western Council of whom at least thirty-three were Latin speakers and thirty-eight Greek speakers.² The large Latin speaking element at the Council would require Latin to be used in the debates - certainly the president Ossius would have spoken in Latin, his native language, although earlier in his life he had a fair command of Greek while in the service of Constantine.³ It is therefore probable that a Latin version of the main Encyclical letter would have been needed from the first and the fact that two of the four extant versions of the letter are in Latin would appear to confirm this. Schwartz and Turner held that the version of Hilary (2) is the authentic, original letter although Feder and Gelzer⁴ think that this is a translation of a Greek original. However the question whether a Latin or Greek version had the priority cannot be answered with certainty. The Latinity of the Council's letter to Constantius (I below) is unquestioned and it is possible that the bishops, and their assistants, drew up a Latin version of the Encyclical letter first but that this was immediately translated into Greek by a translator or translators who knew both languages. In the same way the letters of Theognius, the reports on Asclepas and parts of Marcellus' book were no doubt read first to the assembly in Greek⁵ but immediately translated into Latin. This was a recognised procedure - the bilingual character of documents read at Councils is well attested. It may therefore be an anachronism to speak of the priority of one version of the Encyclical letter over another. Both Latin and Greek versions were immediately needed - the more so as copies were sent around the Christian world in the West and the East soliciting further signatories.

B. The Letter to the Church of Alexandria: the only extant version is in **Apologia contra Arianos** 37,1-40,3 (Opitz *ibid* 115-118). This deals only with the case of Athanasius and the Alexandrian presbyters, allegedly persecuted by the Easterns, and covers familiar ground. It was not intended to supersede the main Encyclical letter but to supplement it. This must have been drawn up at Serdica in Greek, possibly by Athanasius himself. It contains no list of signatories.

C. The Letter to the Bishops of Egypt and Libya: in **Apologia contra Arianos** 41. This is identical with B apart from the omission of the passage on the Alexandrian presbyters. Opitz does not print the letter.

D. **The Letter to the Churches of the Mareotis:** originally no doubt in Greek but now extant only in Latin (Turner *ibid* 657-8) and contains only twenty-seven signatories headed by Ossius and Athanasius.

E. **The Letter of Athanasius to the Churches of the Mareotis:** extant now only in Latin (Turner *ibid* 659-62) and followed by a list of sixty signatures headed by that of Protogenes. This is the only list which is not headed by Ossius. Special attention is paid in this letter to the condemnation of Gregory of Cappadocia, the *de facto* holder of the Alexandrian see in Athanasius' absence.

F. **The Letter of Athanasius to the clergy of Alexandria and the Parembolē:** extant in Latin (Turner *ibid* 654-6) it deals mainly with the refusal of the Easterns to attend the Orthodox Council and with the excommunication of their leaders.

G. **The Letter to Pope Julius:** Hilary, *Collectanea Antiariana Parisina* B. 2,1-4 (CSEL 65, 126-139) This Latin version may be the original. It deals briefly with the proceedings and decisions of the Council and with the deserters, Ursacius and Valens. It lists the seven Eastern bishops who have been excommunicated; the list of signatories numbers sixty, headed by Ossius.

H. **The Letter of Ossius and Protogenes to Julius:** (Turner *ibid* 644) This brief note assures Julius that the Council had no intention of superseding the Nicene Creed.

I. **The Letter to Constantius II:** extant in Latin which may be the original (CSEL 65, 181-4) and referred to in B and C. This reports on the decisions of the Council and implores the Emperor to issue an order that the exiles be allowed to return to their sees *ut ubique grata libertas sit et iucunda laetitia*. We have given an English translation in Appendix A.

C. J. Hefele⁶ argued that D, E and F are spurious documents on the grounds that the Easterns say of themselves 'we are enemies of Christ' and that the contents of these letters are lame and feeble, the style pointless and trivial. However it is a fact that Athanasius did constantly repeat the same points, such was his concentration on the issue of his deposition and, as we see elsewhere in his writings, he was adept at summarizing and putting into the mouths of his opponents what he thought they should have said. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of these letters because they are contained in the Verona Codex⁷ any more than the authenticity of document A4. It is noticeable that of the eight letters (B - I) four are addressed to Alexandria, Egypt and Libya. These bear the unmistakable stamp of Athanasius' hand and influence. His aim was to ensure that his acquittal was widely known in and beyond his own diocese

and so prepare the way for his return to Alexandria. These letters are an eloquent testimony to his influence at the Council.

It is strange that, among the extant letters, there is none addressed directly to the Western Emperor Constans who had convened the Council. However according to Athanasius Constans wrote to his brother Constantius concerning the Council.⁸ So we must assume that the Western Emperor was quickly informed of its decisions. This coheres with statements in Letters B and C that the Council had written to both Emperors. The letter to Constantius (I) was undoubtedly written in Latin and is a remarkably bold letter which casts a suspicion of Arianism on the Eastern Emperor by branding his most prominent bishops as such, while at the same time appealing to the Emperor's **pietas**. The complaints of the Western bishops concerning the persecution which their supporters had been enduring leads on to a veiled hint that if Constantius does not separate himself from the Arian bishops he will have to endure the canonical procedure, like any other Christian. The appeal to the Emperor's **pietas** was no doubt designed to touch his tenderest spot as he thought of himself, and was thought by others, such as Cyril of Jerusalem, to be **Christianus pius**. Historically there is no indication, at the time of Serdica, that Constantius was an out-and-out Arian - rather he took his stand, like many of the Eastern bishops, on the Antiochene creeds of 341 and on the decisions of the Council of Tyre.

Two Western legates, Vicentius of Capua and Euphrates of Agrippina, were despatched personally to obtain the Eastern Emperor's consent to the deposed bishops returning to their sees. According to Theodoret⁹ Constans himself chose the two bishops who were to go to Antioch and added to them Salianus, a military commander, to strengthen the delegation. They carried letters from Constans, some threatening. However it seems more probable that the bishops were chosen by the Council itself to convey its decisions to Antioch, although certainly Constans was kept closely informed and added his weight behind the Council's decisions. The delegation arrived around Easter 344. Constantius however was not to submit quickly and it was only after the disgraceful episode concerning Stephen, bishop of Antioch, that he reacted more favourably to the decisions of the Council, and even then only because of his political weakness vis-à-vis his brother, Constans.

The Western letters we have considered are dominated by the case of the deposed bishops. However on the agenda to the Council were other important matters and once the letters had been dictated to stenographers, and were in the hands of translators, the bishops could pass to other weighty issues, such as the adoption of a Creed, a new Easter decree and the enactment of Canons. These further matters suggest that Ossius may have had a wider view of the Council's purpose than Athanasius and Marcellus. We should be wise not to consider the letters in isolation but only as part of a larger agenda. There were pressing issues concerning the organisation of the Church at local, provincial and regional level in the West which the bishops had yet to consider.

The Eastern group of bishops, numbering between seventy-five and eighty, who assembled in the imperial residence in Serdica composed but one letter which is now extant only in the Latin of Hilary, **Collectanea Antiariana Parisina** Series A IV 1-28 to which is appended a Creed, identical with the Fourth Creed associated with the Dedication Council of Antioch held in 341, and a list of seventy-three names which we have already examined. (CSEL 65, 48-78) This Encyclical letter was originally drawn up in Greek at Serdica but we have suggested that it may not have been despatched until the bishops reached Philippopolis on their way home. Indications that the original was in Greek can be found in the Latin text. Thus in chapter 2 (CSEL 65,49) we have **Exstitit namque temporibus nostris Marcellus quidam Galaciae, haereticorum omnium execrabilior pestis. Haereticorum omnium** is a genitive of comparison which is Greek grammar, not Latin. Similarly we read in chapter 11 (CSEL 65, 56), **quia et alii quique in praeteritum pro suis facinoribus detecti sunt.** The use of **quique** with a verbal clause like a relative clause recurs and cannot be a plural of **quisque**. The **-que** is confusing in the Latin and it would seem unlikely that **alii quique** means 'others and those who...' It is more likely that behind **quique** is the Greek indefinite relative ὅστις = ἄλλοι οἱ πρῶτες with the verb and should be translated 'because even others who in the past...' ¹⁰ Unfortunately hitherto no translation of this document has been available in any of the European languages ¹¹ and this has led in some quarters to the Council being studied from the Western point of view with insufficient attention having been paid to the Eastern position at Serdica. There is however little doubt that the Easterns regarded themselves as a legitimate Council in their own right and not as a pale imitation of the Western. ¹² However they had come to Serdica with no fixed agenda and possibly without a secretariat, although the presence of imperial counts would have ensured that they had some facilities. Their Encyclical is likely to have been originally composed in Greek but, as it is addressed, among others, to bishops in Campania and to Donatus of Carthage a Latin translation would soon have been needed. Where this Latin translation was made cannot now be ascertained - possibly in Philippopolis where they halted after leaving Serdica. Hilary's text appears to be based on this.

We have drawn upon the contents of the Eastern Encyclical in previous chapters but a few additional points may be made here. The Eastern leaders were clearly bidding for wide support for their position, as is shown by the variety of persons addressed in the exordium to their Encyclical and, in particular, were hoping to detach Gratus of Carthage from supporting the West. The Easterns appeal constantly to the rule and tradition of the Church ¹³ which they believe they alone are maintaining and which has come down to them from the apostles and their forefathers. It is the Westerns, they assert, who have violated this tradition.

It is significant that the Eastern Encyclical deals with the case of Marcellus before that of Athanasius. He was a great bone of contention between the East and the West as can be shown from a study of the

Eastern Creeds.¹⁴ If the West had come to doubt his credentials earlier, and not have allowed Marcellus to trade on his anti-Arian stand at Nicaea, it is possible that a more favourable climate might have been present at this Council. In connexion with the condemnation of Marcellus at the Council of Constantinople c. 336 the Easterns state that in the archives of the Church (*in archivo ecclesiae*) were holy writings which controverted Marcellus' view.¹⁵ The Church appears to have adopted the Jewish institution of a Genizah, or depository for manuscripts, as evidence for its history and doctrine, and this may explain the ease with which Christian books were destroyed by the Roman authorities in times of persecution.¹⁶ The 'archives' to which the Eastern bishops refer were presumably those possessed by various communities, and not only those at Constantinople, as the latter city had only been founded a few years before and would therefore not yet possess extensive archives.

The bishops deal in detail with the alleged 'crimes' of Athanasius in connexion with the Ischyra affair. Various forms of Ischyra's name were current in the Church.¹⁷ It is possible that Ischyra himself was present among the Eastern bishops at Serdica as, among the signatories to this Encyclical, was a certain **Squirius episcopus a Mareota**.¹⁸ As we have already seen Ischyra was notorious for the various versions of the Athanasius affair which he retailed. Presumably the bishops hoped that his presence at Serdica would add weight to their somewhat tiresome repetition of the accusations against Athanasius made at Tyre. The Westerns however were not aware of his presence in the imperial residence and so a clash between Athanasius and his accuser was avoided. The Easterns uncritically accepted Ischyra's accusations but were forced to drop the accusation that Athanasius had procured the murder of Arsenius as the latter had been produced alive at Tyre. It is also significant that the charge that Athanasius had interfered with the corn supply, which they had made to Constantine seven years before, is not now mentioned — an indication that it could not be proved.

The Eastern Encyclical consistently propounds the theory of the irreversibility of the decisions of Councils, which in practice meant only Eastern Councils. In this they ignore the provisions in certain Canons of the Council of Antioch (which met, not in 341, but shortly after Nicaea) which made specific provision for an appeal of sentence to a larger Council than the original.¹⁹ Underlying the Encyclical was a genuine fear of a Western papacy although, no doubt, the Eastern bishops knew that Julius himself was not present at Serdica.

The Easterns excommunicated Julius, Ossius, Protogenes of Serdica, Gaudentius of Naissus and Maximin of Trèves on account of their communion with Athanasius, Marcellus, Paul of Constantinople and others, and because they had introduced the heresy of Marcellus into the Church. They ordered that none of the recipients of their Encyclical should hold communion with Ossius, Protogenes, Athanasius, Marcellus, Asclepas, Paul, Julius and their associates, nor write to them, nor receive letters from them.²⁰ The bishops seem to have borne a special grudge against

Protopogenes, not only because he was bishop of the city where they had assembled and was not of their persuasion, but because he had once written against Marcellus — in other words he was a turncoat.

It is strange that the Easterns did not write to the Emperor Constantius giving their version as to what had happened at Serdica, unless such a letter is lost. They must have realised that the Western assembly was likely to seek the support of the Eastern Emperor, a joint-convener of the Council. It is however likely that Constantius knew of the Eastern decisions (he was in close contact with the Eastern delegation) before he received communications from his brother Constans requesting him to restore Athanasius and the other deposed bishops.²¹ Constantius' subsequent change of attitude towards Athanasius was however due more to fear of Constans' power than to a change of theological conviction. The Eastern bishops, at this stage, must have been conscious of the lack of influence which their decisions had — in part due to the leadership vacuum which occurred after the death of Eusebius of Nicomedia. It is hard to give much credence to Socrates' statement that the Eastern bishops told Constantius that it was better to concede the Churches to Athanasius than to undertake a civil war.²² Such would have rendered their decisions at Serdica of no account.

The Eastern Encyclical reveals nakedly what was at stake at Serdica and is a powerful corrective to a view of events based solely on the more numerous Western documents. There was a chasm of misunderstanding which proved impossible to bridge. The Easterns were not prepared to reconsider the evidence on which they had condemned Athanasius in 335, nor to agree that the Council of Rome had any validity. However the ability to understand the theological position of others is a rare phenomenon at any period. In a hierarchical society one's position was either right or wrong.

CHAPTER 9

THE CREEDS and EASTER CYCLES

The many documents which stem from the Western Orthodox assembly, and also the Eastern Encyclical, concentrate mainly on jurisdictional questions rather than on those *de fide*. Only rarely are matters of theological belief raised. This is surprising in view of the stated aim of the Council which was to consider questions 'concerning the holy faith and the integrity of truth'.¹ However towards the close of the Western Encyclical letter to all the Churches comes this passage:

'For they who separate the Son and alienate the Word from the Father, ought themselves to be separated from the Catholic Church and to be alien from the Christian name. Let them therefore be anathema to you, because they have corrupted the word of truth. It is an apostolic injunction, "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed."' ²

However there exists a formulary of faith associated with the Western Council which has been the subject of considerable debate. The text of this Creed is preserved in four sources: Theodoret, *H E* 2, 8, 37—52 (ed. Parmentier and Scheidweiler *G C S* 44, 112—118); Theodore Lector, *Historia Tripartita* (Cod. Marcianus); Cassiodorus, *H E* 4, 24 (a Latin adaptation of the *Historia Tripartita*); and the *Collectio Theodosii Diaconi* (C. H. Turner, *Monumenta* 1, 2, 651—3). In all these sources the Creed occurs as an appendix to the main Encyclical letter of the Western Council to all the Churches. There is little doubt that Ossius, the president of the assembly, and Protogenes, the local bishop, composed this creed or, at the least, brought it before the Council. This information is given in a letter from Ossius to Julius, bishop of Rome, a fragment of which is preserved in the *Collectio Theodosii Diaconi*:

'To our beloved brother Julius, from Ossius and Protogenes. We have and keep in our possession the writing which contains the Catholic Faith drawn up at Nicaea which all the bishops present agree. But since then Arius' disciples have stirred up blasphemies we thought it necessary to inform your kindness, beloved brother, that the former creed remain firm and fixed, but that the following more abundant exposition of the truth, be propounded so that all teachers and catechists may be more enlightened and that their opponents may be defeated and hold the Catholic and Apostolic faith'.³

It appears that Sozomen knew of this letter and formulary:

'Ossius and Protogenes, who held the first rank among the Western bishops assembled at Serdica, fearing perhaps lest they should be suspected of making any innovations upon the doctrines of the Nicene Council, wrote to Julius, and testified that they were firmly attached to these doctrines but, pressed by the need of perspicuity, they had to expand the identical thought, in order that the Arians might not take advantage of the brevity of the document, to draw those who were unskilled in dialectics into some absurdity'.⁴

Prior to this passage Sozomen states that the Serdica Creed contained the same thought and very little change in the wording of the **Nicaeanum**, which is hardly borne out by an examination of the two Creeds. It is possible that Sozomen had not actually read the Serdica Creed but that his deduction as to its character was made from statements in Ossius' and Protogenes' letter to Julius. Theodoret, who preserves the Creed, believed it was an official document of the Western Council and this judgement is undoubtedly correct as there would be little point in Ossius' writing to Julius to assure him that the new Creed was not intended to supplant the **Nicaeanum** if it was not intended as an official symbol of the Council.

However Athanasius, almost twenty years later, took a very different view of the Western Serdica Creed. He presided at the Council of Alexandria, held in 362, which was convened to restore unity in the Church and to discuss the problem of the readmission of Arians to communion. The proceedings of this Council are known only from Athanasius' **Tomus ad Antiochenos**.⁵ In chapter 5 Athanasius states:

'And prohibit even the reading or publication of the paper, (καὶ τὸ Θρυλῆθὲν γούν παρὰ τινῶν πιττάκιον) much talked of by some, as having been drawn up concerning the Faith of the Council of Serdica. For the Council made no definition of the kind. For whereas some demanded, on the ground that the Nicene Council was defective, the drafting of a creed, and in their haste even attempted it, the holy Council assembled in Serdica was indignant, and decreed that no statement of faith should be drafted, but that they should be content with the Faith confessed by the Fathers at Nicaea, inasmuch as it lacked nothing but was full of piety, and that it was undesirable for a second creed to be promulgated, lest that drafted at Nicaea should be thought imperfect, and a pretext given to those who were often wishing to draft and define a creed. So that if a man propound the above or any other paper, stop them, and persuade them rather to keep the peace. For in such men we perceive no motive save only contentiousness'.⁶

It is significant that Athanasius somewhat disparagingly calls the Western Serdica creed *πιττάκιον*, i.e. a 'paper' or 'sheet' or 'written message', although he admits that the Creed was the subject of current debate with some people asserting that it was an authentic symbol of the Council of

Serdica. Clearly Athanasius was embarrassed by the doctrine of one hypostasis propounded in the Creed and no doubt this caused him c. 357/8 to omit it from his **Apologia contra Arianos** in which he reproduces in full the Encyclical letters of the Council. The only authority for the view that the Western Council rejected a new creed is Athanasius himself. He came to have grave misgivings about the Council and his evidence must therefore be regarded as suspect unless corroborated by other sources. The vagueness of his statement that 'some' (τινὲς) hastily drafted a new creed is noticeable as the 'some' were Ossius and Protogenes, who were two of his staunchest defenders. De Clercq⁷ suggests that as they were both dead (by 362) Athanasius did not want their names dragged into the conflict over the creed and so covered their memory with the nondescript appellation τινὲς. This however seems an unlikely explanation. We know from other sources, that Athanasius did not hesitate to give a different emphasis to evidence in support of his views and, as the Creed is attached to the main Encyclical letter in all the sources now extant, we must assume that it was an official formulary of the Council.⁸ It could be argued that there were differences of view at the Council as to whether a new formulary of faith was necessary and that this is why Ossius and Protogenes wrote their letter to Julius. However it seems more likely that Julius himself was worried as to the status to the Nicene Creed, rather than the bishops at Serdica, and this is why he was written to. In their Creed they made no reference to Nicaea or its Creed. This is in line with the interesting fact that, in the two decades after Nicaea, there are very few references in Christian literature to the Nicene Creed either on the part of Orthodox or so-called 'Arians'.⁹ The **Nicaeanum** is never quoted in this period and did not emerge from obscurity until the 350's when it was 'rediscovered' by Athanasius and his supporters. The older baptismal creeds continued to flourish without any reference to the **Nicaeanum**. Moreover, as we shall see, the production of new Conciliar creeds went on apace, particularly in the East, with no thought of disloyalty to Nicaea. Even Athanasius, in his earlier works before Serdica, is silent about Nicaea and the technical terms used in this Creed. J. N. D. Kelly points out that it was not until he wrote **De Sententia Dionysii** and **De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi**, in the 350's that open support for the **Nicaeanum** appears. Kelly speaks of Athanasius' 'fine theological tact'¹⁰ as explaining his reticence in his earlier period, i.e. he knew the **homousios** stood under an evil odour and therefore did not wish to provoke a hostile public. His aim was to preserve Nicene doctrine, rather than its technical vocabulary. There is something in this although 'tact' is not a term we would usually associate with Athanasius. Even the Easterns did not question the status of the **Nicaeanum** and sometimes added a modified version of the Nicene anathemas to their Creeds. But the Nicene Creed **per se** had no overriding authority, either for West or East, in the period leading up to the Council of Serdica. Athanasius' statement (in 362) that some of the Western bishops at Serdica demanded the drafting of a new Creed on the grounds that the **Nicaeanum** was defective is not borne out by other evidence and should be received with caution. Men are to be judged by their deeds and not by what they later say.

It seems more likely that a majority of bishops at the Western Council favoured a longer exposition of belief in the light of current problems, e.g. the activities of Valens and Ursacius, and also in order to controvert Eastern teaching of three hypostases in the Godhead, i.e. any form of Origenism. In this they had no intention of undermining, or superseding, the **Nicaeanum** — that was Athanasius' later view. So the formulary was drawn up by Ossius and Protogenes, perhaps originally as a personal declaration of faith, and adopted by the bishops, eventually finding its way into the official documents of the Council. The fact that it was a long, rambling, imprecise, polemical and vindictive document, bearing little relationship to the normal baptismal confessions, explains why it was soon forgotten. Moreover the doctrine of one hypostasis, propounded in the Creed, was soon to be abandoned by the West and Athanasius.

It is not now possible to establish the original language of the Serdica Creed. It is likely that, as with the main Encyclical letter, both Latin and Greek versions would be needed. As Ossius was the main instigator of the Creed, the original draft may have been in Latin¹¹ but this would have been immediately translated into Greek, perhaps by the translators of the Encyclical letter. Of the present four texts of the Creed, two are in Latin and two in Greek; but the two Latin texts appear to be based on a Greek text,¹² the original, authentic Latin text not having been preserved. Even the Greek translation of this Latin original, perhaps made simultaneously at Serdica, has suffered corruption in textual transmission and its Editor, Leofs,¹³ had to make many emendations, not all of which are to be accepted. However the main drift of the Creed can be understood from the extant sources.

This long, polemical document¹⁴ reveals the fears of those who brought it before the Western assembly. It begins by excommunicating those who hold the Arian belief that 'Christ is God, but not true God, and Son, but not true Son'; those who equate 'begotten' with 'made'; and those who assert that the Son of God has a beginning and an end. The Creed then goes on to describe the defectors, Valens and Ursacius, as proceeding from the Arian heresy 'like two vipers brought forth by an asp'. These men asserted that 'the Word and the Holy Spirit were both crucified and slain and that they died and rose again'. This sounds like Sabellianism but it is possible that the text is faulty at this point. To add confusion later the Creed states 'It was not the Holy Spirit who suffered, but the manhood with which He clothed Himself'. The Creed then goes on to condemn, not Arian teaching, but any form of Origenist theology which held that the three persons are separate hypostases: 'we have been taught, and we hold the Catholic and Apostolic tradition and faith and confession which teach that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have one Hypostasis which is termed οὐσία by the heretics'. However this did not involve Sabellianism: 'We do not say that the Father is Son, nor that the Son is Father, but that the Father is Father, and the Son of the Father Son. We confess that the Son is power (δύναμις) of the Father. We confess that the Logos is Logos of God the Father, and that beside Him there

is no other. We believe the Logos to be the true God and Wisdom and Power'. The Creed then appeals to the Johannine teaching on the Unity of the Father and Son as proving that one hypostasis exists in the Godhead against, what it asserts, the heretics teach concerning the relationship in the Godhead as simply one of concord and harmony, not of essence, a belief borrowed by the Second Creed of the Dedication Council from Origen: 'We, as Catholics, unanimously condemn this foolish and lamentable opinion'. The Creed then obliquely refers to Marcellus' teaching (was Marcellus still present when the Creed was presented to the Council?) and it is significant that, for the first time in the West, Marcellus' terminology is avoided and some aspects of his teaching are refuted: 'We also believe that the Son reigns with the Father, that His reign has neither beginning nor end, and that it is not bounded by time, nor can ever cease: for that which always exists never begins to be, and can never cease'. This suggests that Eastern criticism of Marcellus had struck home at this point and that Ossius was having doubts about the bishop of Ancyra — although Marcellus' influence is to be detected in the assertion: 'No one denies that the Father is greater than the Son: not on account of another hypostasis, nor yet on account of their difference, but simply from the very name Father being greater than that of the Son'.

The Western Creed is significant in that it finally alienated moderate Eastern conservative opinion. By coming down decisively in favour of 'one hypostasis' it outlawed Origenism and made further conciliation impossible. Moreover the abusive language inserted in the main parts of the Creed is unparalleled in other Creeds of this period. A final parting shot describes the condition of those who disagree with Western opinion: 'So great is the ignorance and mental darkness of those whom we have mentioned, that they are unable to see the light of the truth'.

Harnack described the Western Creed as 'the most unambiguous expression of Western thought on the subject of the Trinity'.¹⁵ This appears to go too far. While the authors of the Creed are strongly influenced by the Johannine sayings that the Father and the Son are one they never explain how their belief differs from Sabellianism, i.e. in what sense Father and Son are separate persons. In this they compare unfavourably with Tertullian, Dionysius of Rome and other earlier Western thinkers. Loofs¹⁶ argued that the promoters of the Western Serdica Creed and Marcellus were the last representatives of an ancient Church theology which became antiquated by the rise of the Origenist tradition. But this is to ignore the fact that much Eastern Theology remained conservative and had roots other than Origenism; and that, in the West, the belief in a single hypostasis was balanced by the use of the three-fold confession at baptism, in Christian worship and the liturgy, and in the confessions of the Martyrs.

The Western Creed has been succinctly described as a 'polemical broadside'¹⁷ and I believe that it reflects Ossius' own outlook. The aged Ossius has been portrayed as a conciliatory figure, held in high esteem on all sides. So the Western bishops speak of him in their Encyclical to all the Churches as 'above all that man of most happy old age, Ossius,

one who on account of his age, his confession, and the many labours he had undergone, is worthy of all reverence'.¹⁸ However there was a more violent and uncompromising side to his character and a total inability to understand the purport of Eastern theology. His long absence from involvement in theological issues prevented his understanding what was at stake in the Christological and Trinitarian controversy. Like Athanasius he thought that the majority of moderate, conservative Eastern bishops were Arians **in toto**. The Creed associated with his name alienated the latter still further and made a rapprochement impossible. It may be that Ossius was particularly affronted by the 'flight' of the Eastern group from Serdica and may have thought he had been snubbed. Yet the fact remains that, like Athanasius, he demanded unconditional surrender to the Western Serdica viewpoint, including belief in one hypostasis in the Godhead.

The Eastern bishops at Serdica attached to their Encyclical letter a Creed, which was identical with the so-called 'Fourth Creed' associated with the Dedication Council held at Antioch in 341. When and how this creed was drawn up it is not now possible to ascertain. Athanasius¹⁹ states that, after they published the first three formularies, the bishops at Antioch felt dissatisfied with their work and, fluctuating in their opinions, drew up a Fourth formulary which they despatched by four bishops to Gaul to be delivered to Constans. Socrates²⁰ tells the more improbable story that the four bishops, on their arrival, refused to have anything to do with Athanasius and, suppressing the creed which had been promulgated at Antioch, presented to Constans another formulary composed by themselves. The circumstances surrounding the envoy of the four bishops are obscure, as we have already noted; Athanasius branded it as an Arian manoeuvre and it came to nothing. But the 'Fourth Creed' had considerable subsequent influence, being adopted at the Eastern Council of Serdica in 343, at Milan in 345 (the Macrostich), and at Sirmium in 351, although always with additional anathemas. The text of the 'Fourth Creed', adopted at Serdica, runs as follows:²¹

'We believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, Creator and Maker of all things, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named; And in His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, through whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, being Word and Wisdom and Power and Life and true Light, who in the last days because of us became man and was born from the holy Virgin, who was crucified and died and was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day, and was taken up to heaven, and set down on the right hand of the Father, and will come at the end of the age to judge living and dead and to reward each according to his works, whose reign is indissoluble and abides for endless ages; for He will be sitting on the Father's right hand not only in this age but also in the coming one; And in the Holy Spirit,

that is the Paraclete, whom He sent as He promised to the Apostles after His ascent to Heaven to teach them and to remind them of all things, through whom also the souls of those who have sincerely believed in Him will be sanctified. But those who say that the Son is from nothing, or is from another hypostasis and is not from God, and that there was a time (Χρόνος) when He was not, the Catholic Church regards as alien'.

This Creed was essentially conciliatory and eirenic and seems to reflect an older baptismal form. It does not emphasise the separateness of the three hypostases, which was a bone of contention for the West. The introduction of χρόνος, for the first time in credal formulae, makes more explicit the condemnation of Arianism and comes close to the Nicene anathemas and the rejection of the Arian belief that the Son came from nothing and was a separate hypostasis from God is emphatic. The anti-Marcellus clause however ('whose reign is indissoluble and abides for endless ages') cut the ground from any accommodation with the bishop of Ancyra who for the past decade had been an **enfant terrible** to the East. The fact that the 'Fourth Creed' does not mention the **homoousios** is not significant at this period and should not be interpreted as disloyalty to Nicaea — Julius, Athanasius and the orthodox assembly at Serdica did not refer to it — only later was it to become the watchword of the pro-Nicene theologians.

It is significant that the Eastern bishops at Serdica adopted the conciliatory 'Fourth Creed' and attached this to their Encyclical rather than the official 'Second Creed' of Antioch, which an ancient tradition linked with Lucian of Antioch.²² The 'Second Creed' was a long rambling document strongly anti-Sabellian and anti-Marcellian with the traditional credal clauses heavily expanded with biblical phraseology. The 'Second Creed' asserts three hypostases each possessing its own subsistence power and glory bound together by will 'of a Father who is truly Father, and a Son who is truly Son, and of the Holy Spirit who is truly Holy Spirit, the names not being given instant meaning or effect, but denoting accurately the peculiar subsistence, rank and glory of each that is named, so that they are three in subsistence and one in agreement'.²³ The belief in three hypostases, strongly put forward in the 'Second Creed,' made any accommodation with the West difficult. However the 'Fourth Creed', which underplays the separateness of the hypostases, was far more conciliatory and it was this Creed which the Eastern bishops adopted at Serdica, in spite of the fact that the contacts with the West had proved abortive. This in itself is remarkable and shows that the Eastern intention, in theology, was conciliatory and not to polarise their position in respect of the West. However to the 'Fourth Creed' they added significant anathemas which reveal the difficulties they were facing:

Similiter et illos, qui dicunt tres esse deos aut Christum non esse deum aut ante aevum non fuisse Christum ne-

Likewise also those who say that there are three Gods, or that the Christ is not God, or that before

que filium dei aut ipsum patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum aut non natum filium aut non sententia neque voluntate deum patrem genuisse filium, hos omnes anathematizat et execratur sancta et catholica ecclesia.²⁴

the ages He is neither Christ nor Son of God, or that Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same, or that the Son is unbegotten, or that the Father did not beget the Son by His choice or will, the Holy and Catholic Church anathematizes.

The Eastern bishops, in the first clause, wished to clear themselves of the belief that three hypostases in the Godhead was the equivalent of tritheism, which was a Western criticism of their position at Serdica. The other clauses are directed against Marcellus and reinforce the anti-Marcellian character of the earlier Creeds of Antioch. Marcellus held that the words 'Christ' and 'Son of God' only applied to the Logos after the Incarnation and his system appeared to the Easterns as Sabellian — hence the anathema against the three persons being 'one and the same'. Moreover we know that Marcellus was reluctant to ascribe birth to the Logos, confining it to the human Jesus, and that he refused to believe that the Father exercised choice and will in the begetting of the Son²⁵ as this (for him) would have involved Arianism. This anathema against Marcellus runs parallel to what the bishops said about him in their Encyclical, the horror they felt at his presence at Serdica in the Western delegation, and his admission to communion which was presented to them as a **fait accompli**.

The difference in spirit between the formulary adopted by the Western assembly under Ossius' and Protogenes' influence and the Eastern Creed is pronounced. The fact that the Easterns did not draw up a new Creed at Serdica illustrates the conservative character of their theology. The majority were not anti-Nicene but moderate conservatives with a theology which had its roots in the pre-Nicene period of the Church. It may even be doubted whether some of the Eastern leaders are correctly characterised as 'Arians'.²⁶ However the West would have none of this and by coming down decisively in favour of the 'one hypostasis' made further reconciliation impossible. This conciliatory spirit on the part of the Easterns continued to be shown in the years following the Serdica breakdown. In 345 four bishops went to Milan with the 'Macrostich' or 'Long-lined' creed²⁷ in order to explain to Constans and the Westerns the Eastern position. A well-known authority has stated that the Creed 'breathes the spirit of appeasement as the tide was now flowing strongly in Athanasius' favour'.²⁸ A close reading of the Creed does not quite suggest this. The Macrostich is in fact the 'Fourth Creed' of the Dedication Council with the additional anathemas, already discussed, considerably expanded with seven lengthy paragraphs explaining the Eastern position. These paragraphs avoid the use of the words **hypostasis** and **ousia**, which had caused such misgivings, and also the formula 'three hypostases'. Although the independent existence of the Son and Spirit is affirmed the Macrostich

strongly emphasises the unity of the Father and the Son. And, as is usual with the Eastern Creeds, the teaching of Marcellus and his followers is condemned and they are relegated to the company of the Jews and Paul of Samosata. The Western bishops made no response to the Eastern gesture (for it was that and not appeasement) in sending the four bishops with the Macrostich. They were met, however, with blank rejection except that the Westerns were prepared to agree in the condemnation of Photinus, Marcellus' disciple, whose teaching had proved too much for the West. Otherwise they demanded that the Easterns renounce belief in 'three hypostases' to which they could not agree — although they were prepared to drop the use of the term. At the Council of Sirmium in 351, which was a wholly Eastern gathering, the Eastern bishops formally condemned Photinus and removed him from his see. The Council then published a Creed²⁹ which was the usual 'Fourth Creed' of Antioch, enlarged with lengthy anathemas mostly directed against the teaching of Marcellus and Photinus. But overall the Creed was again conciliatory and made no mention of the three hypostases, although maintaining the distinction of the persons.

The study of the Creeds adopted by each side at Serdica, and their background and influence, illustrates the mental chasm between East and West which proved impossible to bridge. What was at stake was not the West defending the Nicene Council and Creed against Arianism, but, on the one hand, Western theology, with its overwhelming emphasis on the Unity of Godhead and its too ready acceptance of the theology of Marcellus, and on the other the Eastern idea of the Godhead as three hypostases, with the Father in the first rank, which the Easterns affirmed was not tritheism, but had biblical and pre-Nicene roots as well as roots in Origen's teaching. The West branded the Eastern emphasis as Arianism while the East saw the Western 'one hypostasis' as perilously close to Sabellianism. Neither side at Serdica, nor in the years immediately following, intended to be disloyal to the Council of Nicaea or to supersede its Creed. But the mental gulf and misrepresentation between East and West went so deep that reconciliation, which could have been accomplished on the basis of the 'Fourth Creed' of Antioch, proved impossible to achieve.

In addition to the Creeds one other matter was considered by both the Western and Eastern assemblies — the date of Easter. The Council of Nicaea claimed that unity had been achieved as to this celebration; the Eastern Church, which had previously followed Jewish usage, would now conform to the Roman and Alexandrian method of calculating the feast.³⁰ The Council more specifically stated that Easter should be kept after the spring equinox but the date for this varied — the Alexandrians following 21 March and the Romans 18 March.³¹ But Nicaea failed to settle the date as between Alexandria and Rome although, in practice, the bishop of Alexandria calculated the date and then notified the bishop of Rome. The difference however remained — Rome and Alexandria celebrated Easter on different days in 326, 330, 333, 340, 341, and 343 — and the

question was taken up again at the Western Council of Serdica. According to **Index 15** of Athanasius' **Festal Letters** (342/3) a decree concerning the date of Easter was issued which would be binding for fifty years, and which both Churches would announce in the existing manner: Ἐν Σερδικῇ συμφωνίας γενομένης περί τοῦ πάσχα, ἐξέδοσαν πίνακα πεντήκοντα ἐτῶν ὥστε κατὰ τό ἔθος παραγγεῖλαι πανταχῇ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους καί τοὺς Ἀλεξανδρείας.³² However no text of this Easter decree has come down to us. It is likely that the main assembly of bishops would have left the compilation of the fifty-year table to specialists in the Roman and Alexandrian Churches some of whom may have been present at the Council. We have already noted³³ that a difference existed between the two sees as to the date of Easter 343 (27 March and 3 April) and this is an indication that the new arrangement was drawn up after Easter 343, i.e. the Council of Serdica was held in the autumn of that year. Both sides had to make concessions and problems were not solved overnight. Thus, according to Alexandrian usage, Easter 346 should have fallen on 27 Phamenoth = 23 March, but Athanasius says in **Festal Letter 18** (for 346): 'Let no man hesitate concerning the day, neither let any contend saying, it is requisite that Easter should be held on the twenty-seventh of the month Phamenoth; for it was discussed at the holy Council (i.e. Serdica) and all there settled it to be on iii Kal. April. I say then that it is on the fourth of the month Pharmuthi; for the week before this is much too early. Therefore let there be no dispute, but let us act as becometh us. For I have thus written to the Romans also'.³⁴ Athanasius went along with Roman usage notwithstanding some opposition from within his own see. There was a further difference in 349 when the Alexandrian computation placed Easter on 28 Pharmuthi = 23 April, whereas the Roman Church held that Easter, according to an ancient tradition, should not be held later than 26 Pharmuthi = 21 April. A compromise was reached placing Easter on 30 Phamenoth = 26 March.³⁵ The tables compiled by M. Richard show that there were further difficulties at later dates and E. Schwartz, in an exhaustive study,³⁶ showed how the agreement at Serdica between Rome and Alexandria failed to fit in with the desire of the Patriarchs of Alexandria to secure complete supremacy for their Easter cycle. Theodosius, after the establishing of the peace of the Church, was forced to take fresh steps to enforce uniformity concerning the Easter date. In 387 those following the Roman cycle kept Easter on 21 March, but those following Alexandria not until 25 April. Theodosius therefore asked Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, to explain the difference of five weeks and, as a response, he drew up a chronological table for Alexandria. Ambrose of Milan, in his letter to the bishops of Aemilia, followed the Alexandrian computation. The question of a fixed date for Easter has not yet been finally settled as between the different parts of the Church and the intention of Serdica has proved difficult to fulfil.

The Eastern Council was also concerned with the date of Easter and a full computation of dates is extant in Latin in **Collectio Theodosii Dia-**

coni,³⁷ although behind this lay a Greek original. This covered a thirty-year cycle and, in view of the short time which the Eastern bishops spent in Serdica and their pre-occupation with jurisdictional matters, we must assume that this computation was already in existence and was brought with them. The textual corruptions in the existing Latin text are numerous although Schwartz succeeded in emending some of these satisfactorily. In the Greek original, which is likely to have emanated from Antioch,³⁸ the Macedonian-Antiochene names of the months corresponded exactly with the Roman months but in the Latin text the names of the months have sometimes become misplaced. It is interesting that in our text a table of the first sixteen years of the Jewish passover is found in addition to the dates of the Christian Easter. These passover dates are the basis of the Christian calculation and they give the full moon of March, although as soon as a full-moon moved back before 1 March a shift occurs. Thereafter the Christian dates are calculated so that the Jewish dates are kept so long as they do not fall before 21 March; when this occurs the Christians put their XIV lunae back thirty days. Thus the Christians observed the old rule of fixing Easter with reference to the Jewish 14 Nisan, but also looked to the Alexandrian tradition of placing the equinox on or after 21 March.³⁹ The first year of the computation is identified in the introduction to the **Cyclus Paschalis** as **prima indictione quia facta est sub Constantino**,⁴⁰ i.e. the year 328. It is significant that the dates for the Jewish passover are given only for sixteen years, i.e. from 328 to 343. Schwartz who, on other grounds dated the Council of Serdica to 342, observed that the dates for the Passover ceased with the year **after** the one in which the table was worked out. This seems an odd procedure and it is surely more likely that the Jewish dates ceased in the year that the tables were brought to Serdica, i.e. the Christians would bring with them the Jewish dates up to the present time, i.e. 343. It is unlikely that the Jews in Antioch had a properly worked out calendar otherwise the Jewish dates for all thirty years would have been given, as with the Christian table. However in the long run it was unsatisfactory for the Antiochene Christians to fix Easter solely by 14 Nisan as they went along. They would need to fix their Easter table in advance as the Roman and Alexandrian usage did. Perhaps they were even aware that the Western Council at Serdica had agreed on the dates for the next fifty years and so they calculated a cycle up to the year 357. If they had gone back eleven days each year, as the Antiochene Jews did, inserting thirty days as soon as the upper limit for Eastern had been reached, they would have had a sequence of dates which would be repeated in thirty years. However there were difficulties in this as it was very easy to fall out of step with the moon. So they took the indiction 328-43 and began afresh in order to have a table which would bear comparison with the Alexandrian and Roman cycles.

How long the Eastern Easter Table remained in use is unknown — certainly by 387 it had been superseded by the Alexandrian cycle. Schwartz regards the Easter table of the Patriarchate of Antioch as part

of a power-struggle in the Church, the desire of Antioch to be as powerful and influential as Rome and Alexandria.⁴¹ This view is in accord with Schwartz's general theory of Church politics in the fourth century. It seems more likely that the Eastern cycle was a sign of independence, a desire to retain earlier Jewish-Christian traditions going back to the pre-Nicene period of the Church, notwithstanding their discouragement by the Council of Nicaea, yet at the same time to be open to the need for a more stable calculation which could be worked out for at least some years ahead.

CHAPTER 10

THE CANONS (1)

One of the stated aims of the Council of Serdica was to re-establish jurisdictional order in the Church:

tertia vero quaestio, quae vere quaestio appellanda est, quod graves et acerbas iniurias, intolerabiles etiam et nefarias contumelias ecclesiis fecissent, cum raperent episcopos, presbiteros, diacones et omnes clericos in exilium mitterent, ad deserta loca transducerent, fame, siti, nuditate et omni egestate necarent, alios clausos carcere et squalore et putore conficerent, nonnullos ferreis vinculis, ita ut ceruices eis artissimis circulis strenguarentur..... et qui ante fuerant deiecti, non solum recepti sunt, sed etiam ad clericalem dignitatem promoti et acceperunt praemium falsitatis.¹

It was natural, then, that the Western assembly, after considering the cases of the deposed bishops and accepting the Creed put forward by Ossius and Protogenes, should go on to promulgate a set of Canons dealing with what the Chunci regarded as the needs of the Church in the fourth decade of the fourth century. At the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325 the Church had only recently come through the persecution of Licinius and so the discipline required of the lapsed (**lapsi**) was a major issue. By 343 this was no longer the case and the Serdica Canons concentrate more on the organisation of the Church at various levels in the light of then prevailing conditions. It is a striking fact that whereas the Nicene Canons deal with the various orders of clergy, and with lay people, the Serdica Canons are almost wholly concerned with bishops. This not only reflects an increase in episcopal power throughout the Church, particularly in respect of the imperial court, but also reflects the contemporary interests of the episcopal members of the Council. The cases of Athanasius, Marcellus and the other deposed bishops had so dominated their deliberations that the rights, responsibilities, conduct and jurisdiction of bishops, and their relation to one another, was a major concern at Serdica. The Canons have not unjustly been called **constitutio de episcopis**.²

Since the sixteenth century European Reformation muffled doubts have been expressed by some Protestants concerning the genuineness of Canons 3 (c), 4 and 7 which sanction appeal by bishops condemned in their own provinces to the bishop of Rome. However a more scholarly attack was launched by the German scholar J. Friedrich³ who argued that these three Canons were a forgery based on a rescript **Ordinariorum sententias** sent to Aquilinus, the Roman Vicar, by Gratian;⁴ the object of

this forgery, which was drafted in Rome by an African Churchman, was to legitimise the right of appeal to the Roman see. Other Canons originated in the **Canones ad Gallos Episcopos**, in the epistle of Innocent, bishop of Rome, to Victricius of Rouen, and at the Council of Carthage (Canon 8) held in 390.⁵ Friedrich maintained, with great erudition, that the Canons were first published in 416-17 when Zosimus, bishop of Rome, availed himself of the spurious Canons, to justify his conduct, and even claimed that they were **statuta Nicaeni concilii**;⁶ only in a later redaction were they claimed to derive from the Council of Serdica itself. E. Babut⁷ restricted his attack to the Canons dealing with appeal to the Roman see which he argued were interpolations designed to enhance papal claims, although the main bulk of the Canons were in his judgement genuine.

On general grounds Friedrich's theory is unlikely in view of the detailed knowledge of the Church history and issues of the early fourth century which the forger would have required in order to perpetrate his forgery. Moreover the later insertion of details from the Canons of Serdica in manuscripts already extant is improbable in view of the wide spread of these documents. The genuineness of the Canons was defended by Duchesne, Funk and Batiffol and finally established **in toto** by C. H. Turner in his great work, **Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Iuris Antiquissima**, Oxford (1930).⁸ For the first time a critical edition of the Latin text of the Canons, with related documents, was made available. Apart from other considerations Turner showed that Friedrich's theory finally foundered on the direct reference (from memory) to Canons 18 and 19 of Serdica by Gratus, bishop of Carthage, at a Council held in his city c. 345 — Gratus himself having been at Serdica: **'GRATUS EPISCOPUS DIXIT: Haec observata res pacem custodit; nam et meminisse sanctissimi concilii Sardicensis similiter statutum, ut nemo alterius plebis hominem sibi usurpet, sed si forte erit necessarium ordinationi, ut de vicino homo sit necessarius, petat a collega suo et consensum habeat'**.⁹ Moreover the fact that the Canons of Serdica were ascribed to the Council of Nicaea by Zosimus is not exceptional. Ambrose¹⁰ likewise assigned Canon 1 of Serdica to Nicaea and many of the earliest Canonical collections bring together those of Nicaea and Serdica in a continuous numeration¹¹ — possibly because Serdica was thought by later ages to have completed the work of Nicaea which had come to have a unique status. The fact that Ossius, who himself put forward many of the Serdica Canons, also presided at Nicaea assisted in the confusion. The Council of Serdica, because of its failure to reunite the Eastern and Western episcopates, fell into disfavour and knowledge of its work was only preserved incidentally. It is possible that the Latin text of the Canons, which we will discuss shortly, would not have survived if it had not been bound up with the text of the Nicene Canons. While Nicaea had no particular status and authority in 343 at the time of Serdica, through the long struggle of Athanasius and the work of the Cappadocean Fathers it came to have great authority in the latter part of the fourth century and took Serdica under its wing.

The original language of the Canons of Serdica has long been the

subject of debate and has not yet been finally settled. There is no manuscript evidence for the priority of either the Latin or the Greek versions of the Canons — although both are of great antiquity. As there were at least thirty-three Latin-speakers and thirty-eight Greek speakers at the Council we would expect *a priori* that both a Latin and a Greek record of the proceedings would have been needed — much as with the main Encyclical letter issued by the Council. The fact that two texts of the Canons exist would appear to support this. However this does not help much in the question of priority, although if the seventy-five to eighty Greek-speaking bishops of the Eastern group had joined the Council the predominance of Greek-speakers would have then made it likely that a Greek version of the Canons would have been prepared first. C. H. Turner¹² argued for the priority of the Latin version and in this he was followed by E. Schwartz¹³ and J. Zeiller.¹⁴ They pointed out that only two of the twenty paragraphs divided over thirteen Canons (in Turner's enumeration) were put forward by Greek-speaking bishops, viz. by Alypius of Megara and Aetius of Thessalonica; all the others are the work of Latin-speakers such as Ossius, Gaudentius of Naissus and Januarius of Benevento. This distribution suggests that the majority of the proposals at the Council were made in the Latin language. Turner also pointed out that there are expressions in the Greek text which are literal translations of Latin originals and cannot be explained in any other way. Thus the expression ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου πλευροῦ (Canon V) must be derived from the idiom *e latere suo* (Canon 7) as it is not found in Greek composition. Similarly the phrases *ut pauperibus ac viduis aut pupillis subveniatur* and *qui aliqua iniqua vi opprimuntur, aut si vidua affligitur aut pupillus expoliatur* (Canon 8 (VII)) suggest that the Latin is the original, as in the first phrase *pupillis* is paralleled by ὀφθαλμός in the Greek, while in the second λαϊκοῖς corresponds to *pupillus*; the Greek resulted from reading *populis* for *pupillis*.¹⁵ Schwartz reinforced the argument for Latin priority by showing that the Greek adverb ἀντικρυς (Canon III) is used as a preposition in imitation of the Latin *contra fratrem suum*. Particularly compelling is the phrase *alibi autem idonea praedia habere noscuntur et adfectiones quibus indulgeant* (Canon 15 (XII)) which has the Greek parallel ἐν ἑτέροις δὲ πρόποις κτήσεις μεγάλας ἐξ ὧν ἐπικουρεῖν δυνατοὶ εἰσιν τοῖς πένησιν the Greek reading is precise and clear while the Latin is at the best ambiguous and obscure. It is hard to believe that the difficult Latin can derive from the Greek, although it is understandable that the Greek can derive from the Latin as the Greek translator, faced with the obscure Latin, made an attempt to interpret it coherently.¹⁶ There are other indications of the priority of the Latin text; in referring to the Council of Elvira Ossius says *memini autem superiore tempore fratres nostros constituisse* while the Greek simply has μέμνησθε¹⁷ As Ossius attended both Councils this would appear to support a Latin original. Then there are two short Latin passages, omitted in the Greek, which it is difficult to believe were added by the Latin translator.¹⁸

However while the Greek text of the Canons can, in certain cases, be proved to depend on the Latin this is not universally the case. That

the Greek is no mere literal translation of the Latin is shown by a study of Canons 19-20 (Greek) concerning the schism in the Thessalonica Church. These Canons are found only in the Greek text, and the Latin manuscripts based on it, but not in the earliest Latin text. These Greek Canons cannot be a late-fourth century forgery, made in order to support claims for the precedence of the see of Thessalonica, as the phrase **non ignoratis quanta et qualis sit Thessalonicensium civitas** occurs in another Canon which is extant both in Latin and Greek and therefore genuine.¹⁹ The reason for the omission of Canons 19 and 20 from the original Latin version must lay in the fact that the Thessalonica schism was of no interest to the West which was not concerned with the disturbances and divisions which had occurred there before the appointment of Aetius as bishop. The Greek text is thus not a literal translation of the Latin but, in some parts, possesses an autonomy of its own. H. Hess²⁰ has pointed to indications that the Greek text sometimes provides a more faithful record of the debate reflected in the Canons. So the personalised phraseology of the debates is more marked in the Greek (ten instances) as against two in the Latin. Similarly the acclamation of approval clauses in the Latin and Greek appear to be independent of each other; of sixteen acclamations in only four does the Greek clause correspond to the Latin. Sometimes a single proposal in Latin appears as two separate proposals in the Greek which renders a direct translation from the Latin by the Greek impossible. The content of the Canons also, on occasions, supports the view that the Greek is not a direct translation of the Latin. Thus in Latin Canon IV the Greek text (6) asks for the intervention of the metropolitan bishop who is not mentioned in the Latin text.²¹ And likewise in Latin XI b, dealing with the right of appeal of presbyters and minor orders against the decision of their bishop, the Greek text (14) states that the cleric has the right to seek refuge with the metropolitan bishop of his own province while the Latin refers such clerics to the **finitimi episcopi**.²² We must conclude that provincial organisation with a metropolitan see was largely unknown in the West at the time of the Council of Serdica while it was a well-established system in the East in the fourth century. The Greek version thus reflects Eastern conditions and is not a mere translation of the original Latin.

How then are we best to account for the phenomena we have outlined above? It would seem that both the Latin and Greek version of the Canons originated at the Council itself in view of the presence of both Latin and Greek-speaking bishops in considerable numbers. De Clercq argued for a priority of the Latin but held that the Greek translator was 'a man of authority and official standing in the assembly'²³ who made the translation either at the Council or immediately afterwards. His standing enabled him to adapt some of the statements in certain of the Canons to suit conditions in the Eastern Church and to leave out paragraphs of little interest. So the Greek version has a certain independence of the Latin while otherwise dependent on it. However this theory would appear to be unnecessary. That the Western assembly had a secretariat and translators with them

may be considered as very probable. The recording of the procedural minutes of Councils was a widespread custom by the early fourth century; so we possess a verbal transcription of the Baptismal Council held at Carthage in 256,²⁴ the verbal process of the trial of Silvanus of Cirta in 320;²⁵ a fragment of the minutes of a Council held at Cirta about 305;²⁶ the record of a dialogue between Liberius and Constantius at Milan in 355;²⁷ the **acta** of the Council of Aquileia held in 381²⁸ and many other examples. Socrates specifically mentions the employment of stenographers (ὀξογράφοι) at Seleucia in 359²⁹ and Sozomen states that shorthand stenographers (ταχυγράφοι) were used at Sirmium in 351;³⁰ Jerome refers to the **scrinia publica** (public records) from the **acta** of Rimini in 359.³¹ The use of stenographers to make records of the debates at Councils is well attested. We can thus envisage that the majority of the proposals at Serdica were made in Latin and that a record of these in Greek was immediately made by a translator from a transcript and perhaps read to the assembly. This would account for the dependence of the Greek on the Latin in the matters raised by Turner and elaborated further by Schwartz. So a translator might misinterpret **pupillis** as **populis**. In regard to the insertion of references to provincial organisation and metropolitans in the Greek text we do not need to believe that this was the work of a well-known person with authority in the Council: rather the translation could reflect interventions in the debates by Greek-speaking bishops who would point out that it would be essential if the Canons were to reflect conditions throughout the Church and not simply the Western part of it, to bring in the right of appeal to the metropolitan. Both texts of the Canons therefore derive from the Council itself³² — the Latin debate being repeated by a Greek interpreter and both sets of minutes originating at the assembly. The fact that these two sets could be compared ensured that the overall pattern was the same, i.e. there was an initial proposition and approved **sententia** or final resolutions. This procedure was not so different from that employed at international meetings today when a simultaneous translation into another language is provided which the translator can adapt as necessary. The fact however that the Eastern bishops had departed for Philippopolis meant that the Western assembly could not be of indefinite length and so the translator(s) would not have had long to compare their notes, make their translations, and for the scribes to make copies. The Latin version of the Canons was taken to Julius by the returning Roman legates while Eastern bishops present at the Western Council took the authoritative Greek versions with them as they left Serdica.

The form of publication of the Canons differs from all known forms of other Eastern and Western Councils of this period. J. Friedrich,³³ followed by V. C. de Clercq,³⁴ argued that the Serdica Canons followed African custom as reflected in the Canons of the Councils of Carthage of 345, 390 and 397. This form reports (1) the words of the proposal **Nomen... Episcopus dixit**; (2) the reason and justification for the proposal with amendments and supplementary material, often informal and dis-

cursive, exposing abuses and suggesting remedies; (3) the question **si ergo et hoc vobis placet?** or **si hoc omnibus placet?** or a similar question; (4) the vote — **universi dixerunt** followed by **placet, placere sibi** or similar phrase. However this was the form of publication of most official **acta** from this period, as Turner and Hess³⁵ show, and was not only an African custom. It was used in many published agreements, as distinct from Canons. The Serdica form thus follows a widespread usage not confined to Canons on Church discipline and order.

We have already noted that the recording of discussions at Councils in the form of minutes was a well-known custom in the fourth century.³⁶ So Sozomen³⁷ gives a detailed account of the proceedings at Constantinople in 360, with paraphrased notes of the public debates, most probably based on the **acta** of the Council itself. Unfortunately we do not know if procedural minutes were taken at the Council of Nicaea in 325 with which Serdica was to become associated in the late-fourth and fifth centuries — although this is perhaps probable. At some stage the stenographic records of Councils were gathered together as Sabinus' *Σύναγωγή τῶν συνόδων* shows, which became one of the sources used by the Church historians Sozomen and Socrates in the fifth century.³⁸ It seems likely that, in this matter, the Church followed the procedure at Roman civil hearings, possibly under the influence of Emperors or imperial officials who were often present at Church Councils. However it is significant that the same procedure of having a stenographic record was adopted at many Councils at which no imperial functionaries were present, e.g. Carthage (256), Antioch (268), Cirta (305) and Carthage (419), and so there would be nothing untoward in the Western Council of Serdica, which was not attended by imperial representatives, adopting Roman civil procedure. We have suggested earlier that the assembly met in a Roman civil building close to the 'S. George' rotunda³⁹ and, if this was the case, its stenographers would have used the same rooms, and had the same facilities, as were enjoyed by the official civil stenographers.

The Canons of Serdica, both in their Latin and Greek texts, appear to be verbatim minutes in which are recorded the actual words of the speakers at the legislative sessions of the Council. So in the disciplinary Canons Ossius speaks, first stating the abuses which require a new rule, then proposing remedies for the abuses, and finally asking for approval, which is given by all the bishops present. Sometimes other bishops intervene with qualifications and, on occasions, Ossius stipulates that the Christian communities must be given notice before the new penalties are enforced.⁴⁰ The phraseology of the Canons reflects in detail the course of the debates in the assembly which give the impression of being unrehearsed and discursive. While it is likely that an outline agenda of the issues and problems to be tackled by the Council had been drawn up beforehand a close reading of the Canons suggests that considerable latitude was left to individual bishops at the assembly. So the Eastern bishops present ensured that the provincial organisation with metropolitan bishops, with which they were familiar in their areas, should be reflected

in the disciplinary Canons — at least in the Greek version of the minutes. In this way, by interventions, the Council was enabled to legislate for the whole Church and not only for the Western part of it.

We must therefore envisage at Serdica full debates in open assembly, with stenographers making a record of these, rather than Canons being drafted beforehand by a Committee and then submitted for approval. There is in fact, little evidence of the later 'committee' procedure in ecclesiastical Councils as early as the fourth century, although 'committees' of enquiry were sometimes constituted by Councils for specific purposes, as at Tyre in 335, although these were not concerned with legislative matters. At Serdica the bishops appear to have followed the 'open assembly' procedure of the Roman Senate which has been studied by Batiffol, Steinwenter and Gelzer.⁴¹ In the Senate a short address (**relatio**) given by the President or other Senator, introduced the question which was to be considered. Each Senator, in order of precedence, then stated his view concisely on the subject (**sententia**) — unlike modern assemblies the senator could speak only once on a particular question. Amendments and further proposals could however be made at the end of the period of interrogation which followed the **relatio**. A vote was then taken during which the **sententiae** were read and the one which first received majority approval was adopted as a resolution; this was then submitted to the President and recorded as a Senate decision (**senatus consultum**).⁴² This senatorial process was used at Church Councils as can be seen from the **acta** of the Council of Carthage in 256, the **acta** of the Councils of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon 451.⁴³ Different procedures were however adopted according to the subjects under discussion, but all were patterned on the civil procedure. While this procedure is well documented it may be considered unfortunate that the stenographic minutes of only one session of the Senate have survived **in toto**. This session was held on 25 December 438 at the house of Glabrio Faustus, Praetorian Prefect, who presided and announced the Theodosian Code with which the senators present were pleased, responding with forty-three acclamations, each of which was repeated from eight to twenty-eight times.

H. Hess⁴⁴ has demonstrated convincingly that this Senate process is clearly reflected in the Serdica Canons. At the conclusion of each question discussed at Serdica comes **universi dixerunt** which is parallel to the vote of acclamation in the Senate which had superseded the **discessio**, or silent lining up by the side of the Senator whose **sententia** the members followed.⁴⁵ Other features of the Roman civil process are also found at Serdica, in particular the use of expressions characteristic of the Senate debates. So the Senate interrogation, **quid fieri placeat** appears in the Serdica Canons as **si ergo et hoc vobis placet?** or **si hoc omnibus placet?**⁴⁶ Hess⁴⁷ notes the striking fact that the word **sententia**, meaning an individual opinion, is found in Canon 19 (Greek text) with τῆς ἐμῆς μετριότητος ἡ ἀπόφασις ἐστὶν αὕτη. As in the Senate each proposal at Serdica was accompanied by information filling in the background of the question (e.g. Canons 8, 13 and 14). Sometimes different questions were contained

within one proposition (Canons 3, 5-6, 9, 11) However with certain Canons immediate assent by acclamation occurred and the initial propositions became also resolutions intended for publication. Further indications that the procedure at Serdica followed the civil process is found in the authorship of various phases. Ossius, as President, introduced the great majority of the initial propositions (11) as against Gaudentius of Naissus (1), Januarius of Benevento (1) and Aetius of Thessalonica (1). The final resolutions were again presented by Ossius and one amendment and one **sententia** were made by Ossius as a response to a proposal presented by another bishop. This was similar to the action of the President in the Senate.

The Canons of Serdica are thus a stenographic record of the main phases of the Senate process which preserve the tenor and details of the debates in the assembly. This record reflects a more rudimentary stage than that provided by the legislative Canons of Elvira (306), Ancyra (312), Nicaea (325), Antioch (328?), Valence (374), Constantinople (381-2), Nimes (394), Toledo (400), Turin (401) and Carthage (401)⁴⁸ which Hess calls the **placuit** from the expression which occurs frequently in the Latin and Greek Canons — **placuit** or ἔδοξε.⁴⁹ The **placuit** type is based on the publication of the Senate resolutions passed at each sitting of the Senate which were eventually combined into a series. This was the final phase of the Senate procedure and it would seem that after this the original minutes were discarded or destroyed as being of no further use. Hess argues that the **placuit** form of the Canons are redactions from procedural minutes of the Serdica type.⁵⁰ This is possible but not quite certain as we cannot trace this process in any extant source.⁵¹ However it is true that the **placuit** form did require editorial work akin to the way in which stenographic records of a meeting today are sometimes 'edited' to produce a final polished form. A further development of the Canons beyond the **placuit** was the 'statute' form which was based on the civil statute. This was a more impersonal and polished style of publication which developed in the Church parallel to the growth of the corpus of civil law. This seems to have arisen first in Antioch during the latter half of the fourth century after the time of the Council of Serdica. This Canonical collection embodied material from a variety of sources in the form of a 'statute'.⁵² This is however very different from the simple recording of procedural minutes which occurred at Serdica.

E. Caspar⁵³ believes that the Western Council of Serdica was deprived of secretarial assistance by the 'flight' of the Eastern bishops to Philippopolis. He holds that the Eastern group would have brought professional stenographers with them as the bishops had been sent by Constantius and were accompanied by imperial representatives. Hess accepts this with qualifications.⁵⁴ This is the reason, according to Caspar, why the 'Western' Canons were not published in a more polished form. However this explanation would appear to be improbable in view of the paucity of documents from the Eastern Council which suggests that the Eastern bishops did not possess much secretarial assistance. The fact that they spent only

a short time in Serdica and Philippopolis is also relevant. On the other hand the many documents in both Latin and Greek and the Canons emanating from the 'Western' Council suggests that stenographers and translators were present throughout. These stenographers could presumably have redacted the *sententiae* into the conventional type of Canon if they had been so requested. The fact that the *sententiae* were not so redacted is unlikely to have been due to African influence as, at the most, three or four African bishops, including possibly Gratus of Carthage, were at the Council. I would suggest that the reason why the redaction of the minutes was not carried out was lack of time and, perhaps, the personal wishes of Ossius who wanted the 'personal' element to remain. The Council, in any event, had been delayed through the abortive negotiations with the Easterns and Ossius and the other bishops may have been satisfied with a simple stenographic record in Latin and Greek of the procedure at the Council. This was carried to Julius by his returning legates, and to the East by the returning bishops, immediately after the close of the Council. It is possible that the translators and stenographers were ready with their procedural minutes as soon as the Council closed.

The exact number of Canons promulgated by the Council cannot be determined with certainty as there is a discrepancy between the manuscripts and this appears to have caused difficulties for the Canonical collections from the outset. The Latin manuscripts vary between eighteen and twenty-one Canons while the Greek manuscripts usually have nineteen or twenty. Moreover the Greek manuscripts have two Canons not in the Latin while the Latin have two not found in the Greek. The order of the Canons also varies between the versions and this complicates their inter-relationship. The main cause for this state of affairs lies in the form of the Canons which we have already discussed in this chapter: there are the many *episcopus dixit* and *Synodus respondit: Placet* clauses with additional material and amendments which might be taken as separate Canons. The reason for the discrepancy in numbering may lie in the circumstances of the publication of the Canons. It seems probable that they were not originally numbered but were a continuous record of the debates in the Council made by stenographers and translators in the form of unnumbered procedural minutes. Turner, in his critical edition of the text,⁵⁵ adopted a system of numbering which he believed best expressed the intention of the original framers of the Canons: so he took as a norm not the initial *episcopus dixit* but the expression of acclamation: *Synodus respondit* (or *Universi dixerunt* or *Responderunt universi*): *Placet*. This gives Turner a total of thirteen Canons in the Latin text. Hess⁵⁶ however uses the numeration system found in the 'Dionysius' and 'Prisca' Latin recensions which give a more detailed division of the Canons. The result is a total of twenty-one Canons (Latin), twenty (Greek) and twenty-five (Theodosian).

We turn finally to the later history of the Serdica Canonical material. In regard to the Latin text Zosimus, bishop of Rome, quoted Canons 7 and 17 (which he attributed to the Council of Nicaea) in order to support

his restoring to communion Apiarius, a deposed African presbyter. The Serdica Canons were thus known in Rome in the early fifth century as the legal dispute between Rome and Carthage concerning Apiarius occurred in the year 418. Carthage rejected these Canons and did not know their origin. However from c. 430 the history of the Latin text of the Canons can be traced without difficulty. The real problem is the seventy-five year period between 343 and 418 during which references to the Canons are few and obscure. In 401 Innocent, bishop of Rome, cited the well known appeal Canons of Serdica in a letter to Victricius,⁵⁷ bishop of Rouen, and, in the same letter, refers to the rule that a cleric from one Church should not be ordained to a higher position in another,⁵⁸ which appears to be based on Canon 19 of Serdica rather than on Canon 16 of Nicaea. The same Canon is paraphrased in a ruling said to derive from the Council of Arles (314) but which probably derives from Siricius' **Epistula ad Episcopos Africae** (A. D. 386).⁵⁹ Two allusions to Canons 1 and 2 of Serdica also appear in the **Canones ad Gallos Episcopos** whose origin is uncertain but may possibly belong to Damasus' reign (366—84).

It would thus appear that the Canons of Serdica were known in Rome in the last quarter of the fourth century but that they were universally ascribed to the Council of Nicaea and indeed continuously numbered with the Canons of the earlier Council. How this arose is uncertain. We know, however, from the letter⁶⁰ of the Council to Julius, bishop of Rome, that Julius' legates took back the Canons with them to Rome, together with an oral report of the proceedings. It is possible that, on arrival in Rome, the Canons were bound together with the Nicene Canons at the instigation of Julius because Serdica was considered by him to complete the work of the first ecumenical Council. As Ossius and Protogenes wrote to Julius to assure him that the Serdica Council had no intention of superseding the Nicene Creed⁶¹ it would appear that Julius was intent on defending Nicaea. But however the Serdica Canons became attached to those of Nicaea the fact that they did ensured the survival of the Latin text of the Canons. They continued to be identified with those of Nicaea up to the ninth century in circumstances unconnected with papal claims which the appeal Canons of Serdica could be interpreted to support. The Latin text was not apparently preserved outside Rome before the compilation of the early collections of Canon Law. The reference by Gratus, bishop of Carthage, in 345 to Canons 18 and 19 is a citation from memory and the introduction of the Serdica Canons into African canon law did not occur before the mid-sixth century.

The confusion of the Canons with those of Nicaea was not a pre-meditated attempt to take the Serdica appeal canons under the wing of Nicaea. Rather the confusion was a consequence of conditions prevailing in the West. In the 350's the Council of Nicaea, and its Creed, came to have a more prominent status, at least in the East, as a study of Athanasius' writings reveals.⁶² It was natural that the Nicene Canons should also share in the rise in esteem accorded to the first ecumenical Council although the West only proceeded slowly with Canonical legislation in

comparison with the growth of legislation in the East derived from Councils. The Nicene Canons therefore came to have a unique status and by the early-fifth century were widely respected even in the West. Innocent, bishop of Rome (402-17), told Theophilus of Alexandria to use the Nicene canons 'for the Church of Rome accepts none other'.⁶³ The identification of the Canons of Serdica with those of Nicaea was the natural outcome of the esteem which Nicaea came to possess from the 350's onwards; the better known Council, at which Constantine had been present, absorbed the memory of the lesser. However a reading of the Serdica Canons will show how different they are from the Nicene reflecting, as they do, problems which hardly existed in 325.

The later history of the Greek text of the Serdica Canons is very obscure. It does not appear in any Eastern collection of Canons before c. 550 when it appeared in the **Synagoga L. Titulorum** of Johannes Scholasticus, patriarch of Constantinople.⁶⁴ Shortly afterwards the Greek Canons appear in the **Syntagma XIV Titulorum**.⁶⁵ All other Greek manuscripts derive from these two collections. We have already suggested that the primitive Greek text originated at the Council of Serdica itself, the two Canons which occur only in the Greek text being based on interventions by Aetius, bishop of Thessalonica, and reflect problems which had arisen in his Church prior to his episcopate. In view of the lack of certain evidence, we cannot assert, with any confidence, that the prototype of the Greek text of the Canons originated in Thessalonica, although Hess⁶⁶ argued that it was filed in the archives of the Church there. We should not assume that only Aetius returned to his see with a copy of the Greek text of the Canons — other bishops may also have possessed copies. Schwartz⁶⁷ held that the translation of the Latin text into Greek took place in Thessalonica but it seems more likely that the translation took place at Serdica simultaneously with the promulgation of the Latin canons. The place of preservation of the primitive Greek text of the Canons however remains unknown on present knowledge.

The version in **Codex Verona LX** (58) of the **Collectio Theodosii Diaconus**⁶⁸ is an independent Latin version of the Greek text of the Serdica Canons which appears to reflect a Greek text of the late-fourth century. However this is not a direct translation of the Greek but a condensation and paraphrase of the Greek Canons. At a few points the Theodosian agrees with the Latin text against the Greek which suggests that the translator consulted the Latin when producing his version. The **Codex Verona** manuscript is dated between the fifth and late-seventh century A. D. and most of it represents a collection of African material of the fifth or sixth centuries bearing the name of Theodosius Diaconus. This consists not only of Nicene and Serdica material and material concerning Athanasius, but also details of Eastern Councils together with African documents — among which are those concerning the dispute between the bishops of Rome and Carthage in 418 over the deposition by Zosimus of the African presbyter Apiarius. Turner⁶⁹ and Schwartz⁷⁰ held that the Theodosian documents pertaining to the Council of Serdica, i.e. the Ca-

nons, Encyclical letter, Creed and letter to Julius from Ossius and Protogenes, originated in Alexandria where the Athanasian material with which they are associated was preserved. It was from Alexandria, according to Schwartz, that they were taken to Africa. However it would seem that the theory of Alexandrian origin of the Theodosian material is improbable as Athanasius himself by the 360's had become a severe critic of the Council of Serdica and its Creed even speaking of the 'tatters of Serdica'.⁷¹ Telfer and Hess argue that Thessalonica first saw the appearance of the Theodosian material where Serdica was erected as 'the bulwark of orthodoxy' after Liberius' demise in 356-7. Later, in the fifth century, the Serdica Canons, Encyclical and Creed found their way to Africa. Again however there is no specific evidence to support this hypothesis and the **penchant** for Thessalonica may well be misplaced. One might just as well argue for Constantinople or Antioch. We have to admit that we do not know the place of origin of the Serdica material in the **Collectio Theodosii Diaconus** beyond stating that it is a valuable witness to the Greek text not long after the Council of Serdica. In many Western Canonical collections the Canons of Serdica immediately follow those of Nicaea without any break, as we have already noted. They were however received by the Eastern Church as having separate, though not necessarily ecumenical, authority in Canon 2 of the Council of Trullo (692) and as such are contained in the corpus of Greek Canon Law.

CHAPTER 11

THE CANONS (2)

Christianity, by the mid-fourth century, had become a popular movement throughout the Mediterranean area of the Roman Empire. Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, had sought to establish a well-endowed Church staffed by a clergy drawn from all strata of the population,¹ men who were not bound to carry out compulsory municipal service as were the provincial middle classes.² As the Church came to own great buildings and to acquire a privileged status in society the pressure to enter its ordained ministry was considerable and successive Emperors sought to prevent decurions and land workers from entering the lower orders of the Church. Yet the Church of the fourth century managed, on the whole, to resist the temptation to recruit its bishops and clergy from only one section of the population although there were dangers, particularly in the East, of too close a connexion with the Court. Many of the bishops were generous to the poor and genuine pastors of their communities. The Canons of Serdica are revealing, not only for their specific jurisdictional content, but also for the insight they give into the social background of the Christian leaders, and the problems which they faced, around the middle of the fourth century.

The Canons show that the Church was becoming a major factor in society. It is a striking fact that so many of the Canons are concerned with bishops, rather than with the lesser clergy and ordinary lay members of the Church. This reflects the position and power which bishops had now acquired in the Roman Empire. The Canons show that a rapid development of provincial organisation had occurred in the East and that a revised system for electing bishops was being evolved. This restricted popular suffrage in favour of a more rigid system of appointment involving the Metropolitan and provincial bishops.³ This was very different from the West where the office of Provincial Metropolitan is not found until the late-fourth or early-fifth centuries. The relation of the bishop to the Imperial Court is treated in several Canons.⁴ There are warnings against bishops who seek worldly dignities and honours from the Emperor — these are a danger to the Church and bishops should not go to the Court unless summoned by the Emperor. The West in particular was wary of Court influence and it is significant that no imperial commissioners accompanied the Western bishops to Serdica. Ossius and the Orthodox were thus free to enact Canons concerning relations with the Court. Some bishops had great estates in cities other than their own and might wish

to go on 'business trips' to administer their estates — a striking indication that some wealthy people had obtained the office of bishop — such 'trips' could be abused and were to be restricted to three weeks in the year — and while seeing to his secular business the bishop is to preside at the eucharist of the local Church for the three Sundays that he is away from his own city.⁵ 'Visiting' bishops, according to the Canons, were to be discouraged as sometimes they were seeking translation to what they regarded as more favourable bishoprics⁶ — no doubt the recent ambitious career of Eusebius of Nicomedia was in mind. Then there is the pressure of rich, professional men who have their eyes on episcopal promotion. The Canons put a brake on sudden promotions by stating that such aspirants should first pass through the lower grades of ministry and their worthiness should be tested at each level. A novice should not rashly be ordained bishop, priest or deacon.⁷ Before the time of Serdica progress through the various orders was not universally observed or even desired. Cyprian was ordained presbyter and bishop without ever having been a Reader or deacon⁸ while Athanasius was elevated direct from the diaconate to the episcopate. There were even exceptional instances of laymen or men in minor orders being elevated direct to the episcopate.⁹ The Canons require this to cease. The constant warnings in the Canons against personal ambition, bribery of lay folk to forward promotion, fraudulent elections and against usurpation of episcopal sees reflect the situation of the Church in 343, as seen through Western eyes. Many orthodox bishops, particularly in the East, had been forced out of their sees by 'Arian' intruders and particular indignation appears to have been caused by the recent attempt of Valens of Mursa to seize the see of Aquileia. The Canons enact the very severe penalty of excommunication and deposition — and even deprivation of the **viaticum in extremis** — against usurping bishops and this reflects the strong feelings of the Orthodox against those who have seized sees.¹⁰

Of particular interest is Canon 6 which forbids bishops from neighbouring provinces consecrating a bishop for a village or a small town where a single presbyter would suffice — rather bishops should be consecrated for cities which already have an episcopal tradition or for places sufficiently populous to be worthy of an episcopal see. The office of **chorepiscopus** (χωρεπίσκοπος) is dealt with in several Canons of Eastern Councils in the fourth century¹¹ and the general picture is of a rural suffragan bishop dependent on a nearby city-Church and bishop. C. H. Turner¹² argued that the chorepiscopate was a local institution confined to the inland provinces of Asia Minor which provided ministration in rural areas. F. Gillmann¹³ however regards the Eastern **chorepiscopus** as a surviving specimen of an older, independent rural episcopate which by the fourth century had come under the domination of city bishops and was in process of being suppressed. The Serdica Canon may allude to the appointment of Ischyrras as bishop of Mareotis,¹⁴ a country suburb of Alexandria, which had never before had a bishop — particularly to the point as Ischyrras was probably among the bishops at the Eastern assembly

at Serdica. The Mareotis community was apparently so small that a Church building had never been erected there as previously they had been subject to the bishop of Alexandria. On the other hand the vast majority of the bishops at the Western Council were city-bishops and only the two bishops from Palestine and Arabia would be interested in the office of **chorepiscopus**. In view of the fact that the Canon does not wholly rule out an episcopal appointment, if the population is of sufficient size and worthy, it is possible that it alludes to Western practice where the country bishop retained, in the fourth century, an independent authority within the boundaries of his area. This was quite different from the East where the office of **chorepiscopus** was losing its independence by the mid-fourth century, and had disappeared by the fifth.¹⁵

The Canons as a whole reflect a genuine pastoral concern and integrity. There is an insistence on moderation and kindness, although not towards ambitious prelates, and a solicitude for the poor and oppressed. The unlearned, poorer bishop who is overwhelmed by a more gifted prelate moving into his community receives sympathy.¹⁶ The Canons show a sense of justice towards excommunicated clerics who are given a right of appeal against condemnation by their bishops.¹⁷ Bishops expelled unfairly from their sees may be received by other cities and allowed to remain there until injustices have been corrected. Even the schismatics who had caused havoc in Thessalonica before Aetius' episcopate may be received back into the fold.¹⁸ The strengths and weaknesses of Christian communities and their bishops are unmistakably reflected in the Canons.

The most controversial of the Serdica Canons are those concerning the right of appeal to the Roman see and we will consider these in some detail. Since the publication of Turner's great work¹⁹ the genuineness of these Canons is undisputed, in spite of variations between the Latin and Greek texts.

Canon 3 (c)

Latin

Greek

Quod si aliquis episcopus iudicatus fuerit in aliqua causa et putat bonam causam habere ut iterum iudicium renovetur, si vobis placet, sanctissimi Petri apostoli memoriam honoremus: scribatur vel ab his qui examinarunt vel ab episcopis qui in proxima provincia morantur Romano episcopo; si iudicaverit renovandum esse iudicium, renovetur et det iudices, si autem probaverit talem causam esse ut ea non refricentur quae acta sunt, quae decreverit confirmata erunt.

Εἰ δὲ ἄρα τις ἐπισκόπων ἔν τινι πράγματι δόξῃ κατακρίνεσθαι καὶ ὑπολαμβάνει ἑαυτὸν μὴ σαθρὸν ἀλλὰ καλὸν ἔχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἵνα καὶ δοκεῖ ὑμῶν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, Πέτρου τοῦ ἀποστόλου τὴν μνήμην τιμήσωμεν καὶ γραφῆναι παρὰ τούτων τῶν κρινάντων Ἰουλίῳ τῷ ἐπισζίῳ Πώμῃς, ὥστε διὰ τῶν γειτονιῶν τῶν τῇ ἐνανεωθῆναι τὸ δικαστήριον καὶ ἐπιγνώμονας αὐτὸς παρέχοι· εἰ δὲ μὴ συστήναι εἶναι τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὥς παλινδικίας χρήζειν, τὰ ἅπαρ κερκρίμενα μὴ ἀναλύεσθαι, τὰ δὲ ὄντα βέβαια τυγχάνειν.

This is quite clear. If a bishop, judged by a provincial court, disputes its verdict then those who tried the case may write to the bishop of Rome and, if he agrees to a review, he is to appoint judges to conduct a re-trial — but if not he is to confirm the sentence. The Latin text does not specify where the retrial bishops are to come from but the Greek text states that they are to be chosen from among the bishops of neighbouring provinces. Hefele, followed by Hess,²⁰ plausibly argued that the Greek text preserves the original reading on the grounds that the phrase **ab episcopis qui in proxima provincia morantur** was written as a marginal note in an early Latin manuscript and subsequently became misplaced. This would appear to be supported by the Latin text of Canon 7 which refers to the neighbouring provinces in a similar context; and it is **a priori** likely that the retrial judges would be chosen from those of a neighbouring province, if only on grounds of convenience. In the Latin text appeal is to be made to the Roman bishop (**Romano episcopo**) while the Greek text specifies Julius, bishop of Rome at the time of the Council. Schwartz²¹ argued that Julius' name was added to the Greek text by a pro-Nicene bishop of Thessalonica some time after Liberius' desertion to the Nicene party.²¹ This is part and parcel of Schwartz's theory as to the reception of the Serdica Canons at Thessalonica and faces the pertinent objection that we would then have expected identical insertions to have been made in the other appeal Canons — but none appear. In view of the historical background to the Canons, viz. the appeal made to Julius by Athanasius, Marcellus and the other deposed bishops against the verdict of the Council of Tyre, it is possible that the Greek text may preserve the original meaning, i.e. Ossius, in proposing this Canon, took as an illustration the actions of the present bishop of Rome.²² It is significant that the Council addressed a letter to Julius which, after quoting S. Paul in 2 Cor. 13,3 went on to state that Julius' absence from the Council could be excused as he was mystically present with them in a harmony of thought and will, though not in the body: **hoc enim optimum et valde congruentissimum esse videbitur, si ad caput, id est ad Petri apostoli sedem, de singulis quibusque provinciis domini referant sacerdotes.**²³ E. Caspar²⁴ made the unlikely suggestion that 'Petri apostoli sedem referant' was a later addition to the letter made not earlier than the time of Innocent I, although there is no textual evidence to support this. Thus the bishops who wrote to Julius from Serdica give a place of honour to the see of Peter to which they are to report each from their own province.²⁵ However nothing is said in the letter about appeals to the Roman bishop from the decisions of provincial Councils. The lack of provincial organisation in the West made it easier for Western bishops to write individually to Julius for guidance, in view of the pre-eminence of his see. Thus Canon 3 (c) could have mentioned Julius personally as a court of appeal against the decisions of provincial Councils (with Eastern judgements in mind), although wider considerations may also have been in the minds of the proposers of the Canons.

Canon 4 contains an amendment, by Gaudentius of Naissus, that if a bishop has been deposed by a provincial Council and disputes the

sentence, then a new bishop should not in the meantime be appointed to his see, unless the bishop of Rome has given his decision in the matter (Latin: **nisi causa fuerit iudicio Romani episcopi determinata**; Greek: Σὰν μὴ ὁ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐπίσκοπος ἐπιγνοὺς περὶ τούτου ὅρον ἐξενέγκῃ). The wording of both texts is slightly ambiguous and this has led to the theory that the bishop of Rome is here constituted a second, formal court of appeal in which he alone may give a final judgement.²⁶ However this is improbable as had this Canon been intended to institute a further court of appeal it would surely have done so in express terms. Moreover the Canon is in the form of an amendment to Canon 3(c) made, no doubt, in the light of contemporary events such as the appointment of Gregory of Cappadocea to the see of Alexandria when Athanasius' case, to Western eyes, had not yet been decided.

Canon 7 is the last which deals with the right of appeal to the bishop of Rome. It repeats 3(c), i.e. the case of a bishop who has appealed against the decision of a provincial Council to the Roman bishop, who then writes to bishops in a neighbouring province asking them to give a judgement in the case. The Canon then continues:

Latin

quod si qui rogat causam suam iterum audiri et depraecatione sua moverit episcopum Romanum ut a latere suo praesbyterum mittat, erit in potestate episcopi quid velit aut quid aestimet: (et) si decreverit mittendos esse qui praesentes cum episcopis iudicent habentes (eius) auctoritatem a quo destinati sunt, erit in suo arbitrio; si vero crediderit sufficere episcopos ut negotio terminum inponant, faciet quod sapientissimo consilio suo iudicaverit.

Greek

εἰδέ τις ἀξιῶν καὶ πάλιν αὐτοῦ τὸ πρᾶγμα ἀκουσθῆναι, καὶ τῇ δεήσει τῇ ἑαυτοῦ τὸν Ῥωμαίων ἐπίσκοπον δόξειν [κινεῖν δόξῃ ἢν' ἀπὸ] ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου πλευροῦ πρεσβυτέρους ἀποστελῆναι, εἶναι ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ὅπερ ἂν καλῶς ἔχειν δοκιμάσῃ καὶ ὀρίσῃ δέτν, ἀποσταλῆναι τοὺς μετὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων κρινοῦντας, ἔχοντάς τε τὴν αὐθεντίαν τούτου, παρ' οὗ ἀπεστάλησαν, καὶ τοῦτο θετέον. εἰ δὲ ἐξαρκεῖν νομίσῃ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πράγματος ἐπίγνωσιν καὶ ἀπόφασιν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ποιήσῃ ὅπερ ἂν τῇ ἐμφρονεστάτῃ αὐτοῦ βουλῇ καλῶς ἔχειν δόξῃ. ἀπεκρίναντο οἱ ἐπίσκοποι τὰ λεχθέντα ἤρεσεν.

This supplements the earlier Canon inasmuch as the sentenced bishop can present his own case to the bishop of Rome and move him to send Roman presbyters, invested with his own authority, to add their judgement to that of a neighbouring provincial Council, the presbyters acting as bishops. If however the Roman bishop considers that the neighbouring Council can make a just judgement on its own then 'let that be'. It would seem that this supplementary safeguard was only to come into operation if the appointed Council of judges was considered incompetent or needed further guidance. It was no innovation for presbyters to represent the Roman see as there were precedents at Arles (314), Nicaea (325) and at Serdica itself.

The presence of Roman legates at Serdica may in fact have provided an impetus for inserting this safeguard into the Canon. Moreover the fact that Athanasius and the other bishops deposed at Tyre in 335 had been given no opportunity of a retrial by an Eastern provincial Council would not have been lost on the Western Council; so the safeguard of a direct appeal by an individual bishop against sentence was inserted in the Canons. Possibly the personal influence of Athanasius, who was present at the Council, may be traced here.

The interpretation of the Appeal Canons concerning the Roman see was the subject of a prolonged and acrimonious debate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between the Gallican and the Curial lawyers who sought support for their own systems of Canon Law in these Canons. The Gallicans asserted that the rights given to the bishop of Rome in the Serdica Canons were *de novo* and that is why Canon 3(c) is addressed to Julius alone. The Curials, on the other hand, sought to show that the right to receive appeals was inherent in the Roman primacy as a divine institution and that Serdica merely defined and declared this. Hefele has discussed this controversy in detail and it need not concern us further.²⁷ The interpretation of the Canons has been discussed more recently by E. Caspar, H. Hess, E. Stein and K. M. Girardet. Caspar,²⁸ who argues for the priority of the Greek text of the Canons, believes that Canon 3(c) is to be separated from the two other appeal Canons and is concerned with a process of revision, rather than with an appeal from a provincial Council; in particular it had in mind the revision of the decision of Tyre against Athanasius which was carried through at the Council of Rome early in 341. The other two appeal Canons are concerned only with the special case of deposition of a bishop and provide for an appeal to the bishop of Rome who can give a final judgement either himself, or through his presbyters. Canon 7 is a vindication of the action taken at the Council of Serdica where, in the case of Athanasius, the personal judgement of Julius (through his presbyters) was made known and ratified. So the Western Council restored Athanasius to his see and the Canon set a seal of approval on Julius' earlier decision. However against this²⁹ is the fact that the Canons deal with an appeal from a provincial Council, not with the decisions taken at Rome or Serdica. Moreover there is no earlier evidence to support the theory that the bishop of Rome had been given universal authority to pronounce judgement on cases of deposed bishops. Julius judges the case of Athanasius and the other bishops simply as a fellow-bishop, albeit an important one. The Canons make no distinction between the appeal procedure and the process of revision of sentence and all three appear to hang together.

K. M. Girardet,³⁰ in the course of an extended study of the fourth century Canons, deals briefly with Serdica. He makes the general point that at Elvira (306) and Arles (314) the charism conditioned the validity of a bishop's judgement while at Antioch (328 ?) and Serdica the validity conditioned the charism. Only insofar as a condemned man makes no use

of the right of appeal is the bishop's judgement ecclesiastically and legally binding. Girardet otherwise holds that the Canons of Antioch and Serdica take a middle position between those of Elvira and Arles on the one side and Nicaea on the other. Both extremes are relativised. He also makes the point that at Nicaea and Antioch Constantine, by his own orders, influenced the direction of Canonical development in order to overcome ecclesiastical disunity.

One of the most interesting points of Girardet's study is his suggestion (largely following E. Stein) of points of contact between the secular and ecclesiastical appeal process. In **Cod. Theod.** 11, 30, 16 (331) Constantine ruled that for an appeal (**appellatio**) against the judgement of judges the judge himself could enter a report, which is made available to the appellant, and then send the records of the case along with the **appellatio**, report and comments of the contending parties to the Emperor. The judgement of the Emperor's court would then be published by decree in the absence of the parties. Girardet shows where the ecclesiastical process agrees with, and differs from, the State procedure. The convicted bishop cannot appeal personally to higher authority (although note the amendment in Serdica Canon 7); like the Emperor the bishop of Rome can examine a challenged judgement and declare it valid. But in the secular process the Emperor handles the case himself and makes a fresh judgement but in the Serdica appeal procedure the bishop of Rome, unlike the Emperor, cannot make the judgement himself but must entrust it to bishops of a neighbouring province — a striking proof that, unlike the Emperor, he did not possess any inherent powers in this matter. There is also a difference with the secular process in regard to asking for the appointment of a judge — it was possible to ask the Emperor to appoint a judge but only in the first instance and not, as with Serdica Canon 3, as a right of appeal against a judgement already given. There are however similarities between the two processes (originally noticed by Stein) in regard to **retractio**. Certain of these were not normally open to appeal e.g. the judicial decision of a praetorian prefect. Similarly the unanimous judgements of a provincial Council of bishops are not normally open to appeal. However in the civil practice a means of appeal was forseen against the judgement of a prefect — a condemned person could procure a new trial by a petition (**supplicatio**) to the Emperor. If the Emperor agreed this could lead to a rehearing of the case by the court of the prefect or his successor although not, be it noted, by a higher authority. So the bishop of Rome could order a **retractio**, but with this difference — the trial process is not repeated before the original Council of bishops but instead the Council of a neighbouring province becomes instead the court of appeal in which Roman presbyters can also participate, if desired. However in like manner this Council of neighbouring bishops is not a second or higher authority, but a parallel authority to the original provincial Council. In both civil and Church cases no one court of appeal is placed over another. Thus appeal to a larger Council, as envisaged in the Canons of Antioch, no longer applies. We will have occasion to mention this shortly.

We must now look more carefully at the Serdica Appeal Canons in the light of their historical context and previous Canonical legislation, and also bearing in mind the parallels with Roman civil practice. Canon 5 of Nicaea had directed that deposed clergy and laity (bishops are not mentioned) should have their cases re-examined by provincial Councils of bishops meeting twice a year. So provincial Councils could pronounce judgements on the acts of individual bishops against their clergy and laity within the same province. Canons 14 and 15 of Antioch, drawn up within a few years of Nicaea, deal more specifically with the case of an accused bishop. If the bishops of a province disagree about his case the Metropolitan is to call on their bishops of a neighbouring province who will resolve the dispute and, in agreement with the bishops of his province, pronounce judgement. Canon 15, on the other hand, states that if the provincial Council of bishops decides unanimously on a verdict, the bishop is not again to be judged by others as the original judgement is final. However Canons 4 and 12 hold out the possibility that a bishop, deposed by a Council, might be restored by another — indeed Canon 12 states specifically that it is the duty of a bishop, deposed by a Council, to submit his case to a greater (i.e. larger) Council of bishops. These Canons cannot easily be reconciled, notwithstanding Hess' somewhat forlorn attempt to interpret Canons 14 and 15 as not excluding a further right of appeal.³¹ The Antioch Canons, interpreted in their most natural meaning, state that a bishop can appeal against sentence to another Council but once the Metropolitan is involved then a final decision can be given which excludes a further appeal. This conflicting legislation was to have important consequences in the East for one of the main planks in the argument of the Eastern bishops in their Encyclical drawn up at Serdica was that the decisions of Councils were irreversible, i.e. they took the position of Canon 15 of Antioch and applied this rigidly without reference to the qualification existing in the other Canons. On the other hand the principle of appeal from one Council to another had been recognised in Canons 4 and 12 of Antioch and Julius later asserted, in his letter to the Eusebians,³² that this had been agreed by the Council of Nicaea, although a reading of the Nicene Canons does not suggest this as Canon 5 of Nicaea deals with clergy and laity excommunicated **by bishops** who have a right to have their cases re-examined by a provincial Council. This is hardly an appeal from one Council to another and it would appear that Julius is interpreting Canon 5 somewhat freely. On the other hand there were good historical precedents for Julius' view in both East and West; so in 251 Cornelius had condemned Novatianism and the East had acquiesced. In 269 at Antioch the Easterns had condemned the doctrines of Paul of Samosata and the West had acquiesced. Donatus had appealed to Rome against the judgement given for Caecilian and his appeal had been allowed. There were thus precedents for holding a new Council in order finally to settle the matter of the deposed bishops soon after Athanasius returned from exile in 338. According to Julius³³ Eusebius of Nicomedia and his followers had themselves requested him to call a Council to this end which was

apparently a bid for Julius' support. This bid, if it occurred, apparently failed as the Easterns declined his invitation saying that no Western bishop should interfere in the matter of an Eastern judgement. This reversal of policy contradicted their previous request for a Council and was, no doubt, due to a realisation that the decisions of a new Council might go against them unless they could muster a very large number of Eastern bishops to be present. The theory of the irreversibility of the decisions of Councils which the Easterns now propounded was quite at variance with their previous view although, as we have seen, in line with certain of the Canons of Antioch. This denial of the right of appeal to another Council was a development of great significance because it put an end to the development of the right of appeal to provincial Councils and so prevented the reconciliation of the episcopal bodies of East and West.

The appeal procedure laid down in the Serdica Canons was determined by these events and by the fact that the appeal of Athanasius and his fellows had been allowed at the Council of Rome early in 341. The right of appeal to the Roman bishop not only followed State procedure, as we have seen, but also fitted in with the fact that provincial organisation was undeveloped in the West at this time in comparison with the East. So bishops, particularly in the West, would naturally look to the bishop of the most prominent see in the Christian world and the only one in the West to have a tradition of apostolic foundation.³⁴ Moreover its central geographical position, large numbers of clergy and great buildings enhanced its importance. Constantinople had no apostolic founder and before S. Andrew came to be regarded as its founder Constantine himself may have been regarded as a 'thirteenth apostle'. Jerusalem was of no great moment in the ecclesiastical politics of the fourth century and the apostolic foundation of the Churches of Antioch and Alexandria was uncertain. The Serdica appeal formulae fit in with the growing power of the Roman see and it was not surprising that the bishop of Rome should be regarded as a fount of appeal for deposed bishops — it would be surprising if he had not in the mid-fourth century.

How far did Julius himself influence the appeal formulae? As he had invited the Easterns to come to Rome and to make their case in person³⁵ he had already involved his office in the affair of the deposed bishops. However we should beware of stating, as Jalland does,³⁶ that he was asserting unequivocally a primacy of legal jurisdiction for his see. This is to read back a later development into the more fluid conditions of the mid-fourth century. Julius is merely asserting the leadership of the Roman bishop in a particular situation and the appeal Canons do not go further than that, viz. they state in certain circumstances appeal may be made to the bishop of Rome just as ordinary citizens could appeal, in certain cases, to the Emperor. The requirement that he had then to appoint judges from a neighbouring province is an acknowledgement of his leadership, although no more. Only if we attribute a formal system of legal jurisdiction to the Church at the time of Serdica can we read into the appeal Canons a Roman primacy of jurisdiction. It is significant in this connexion, that

no appeal is made in the Canons to Matt. 16, 18 (**tu es Petrus**) which we should have expected if a jurisdictional primacy was being asserted. In one sense, as de Clercq³⁷ observes, far from increasing the power of the Roman bishop the Canons granted him less power than he possessed in the past. In the third century two deposed Spanish bishops had appealed directly to Stephen, bishop of Rome, and also Fortunatus had sought recognition from Rome as lawful bishop of Carthage. Only if we read the appeal Canons, with the eighteenth century curials, as constituting the Roman bishop as a second court of appeal in his own right, can we regard Serdica as a milestone in the rise of papal, jurisdictional supremacy. The Canons appear to reflect the growing religious and political power of the Roman see but no more. We have only to compare the limited right of appeal to the bishop of Rome given at Serdica with the more extensive authority accorded by Gratian's edict **Ordinariorum sententias**³⁸ c. 378 to mark the difference. Gratian created the Roman see as a court of first instance for all Metropolitans, and as a final court of appeal for all other bishops.³⁹ This growing jurisdictional authority was expressed in the actions of the Roman bishop. Damasus began to treat requests for guidance as questions sent to the Emperors by provincial governors and composed answers in the style of imperial rescripts. Innocent I and Leo consolidated still further the juridical doctrine of Petrine authority.⁴⁰ But to read this later development into the earlier period is to do less than justice to the fluid conditions which then prevailed. The Serdica appeal Canons were essentially concerned with preserving the rights of the provincial Council and with providing a right of appeal from its judgements. They were not concerned with any inherent rights vested in the office of bishop of Rome. In this they differ from Roman civil practice in which the decisions of the Emperor were supreme being vested in his own **auctoritas**.

CHAPTER 12

SERDICA AND THE LATER CHURCH HISTORIANS

Contemporary documents, emanating from the Western and Eastern assemblies, which we have cited at length in this study provide our main knowledge of the events associated with the Council of Serdica. Although these documents reflect the particular interests and concerns of the participants they nevertheless reveal at first hand the issues which confronted the two episcopal bodies of West and East. The later Church historians Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret had other sources for their knowledge of Serdica although they may also have been acquainted with the Encyclical letters of the Councils — Theodoret, in fact, quotes *in toto* the main letter of the Western assembly together with the Creed which was adopted at the instigation of Ossius and Protogenes.¹ The Church histories of the fourth and fifth centuries were however essentially essays in interpretation reflecting the philosophical and theological positions of their authors. G. F. Chesnut suggests that we should not read them as reflecting the triumph of authority and reason: 'we would do well to consider them instead as the creation of the more radical intellectuals among the Christian party, and as part of the on-going battle between Origenists and anti-Origenists which ran like a submerged turbulence under a large part of Eastern Church history during the fourth and fifth centuries'.²

Socrates Scholasticus wrote his **Church History** between 438 and 443 as a continuation of Eusebius' history down to his own time. He was, by profession, a lawyer and layman and spent his whole life in Constantinople. As a Platonist he consistently defends Origen against his attackers and appeals to him as a norm in theological debate. Although Orthodox and Catholic Socrates had a particular sympathy for the puritan group known as the Novatianists³ probably because they had suffered persecution at the hands of the Arians and had held to the **homoousios** with the Nicene party.

In his account of the events which led up to the Council of Serdica Socrates gives a large space to Paul, bishop of Constantinople, whom he defends and links with Athanasius, on occasions giving Paul precedence. Paul, in Socrates' eyes, was the victim of Arian machinations which were the cause of his ejection, on more than one occasion, from the Church of Constantinople despite the loyalty of the local population to their bishop. In 339/40 Paul, together with Athanasius, Asclepas, Marcellus and Lucius went to Rome and each personally laid his case before Julius, bishop of Rome, who sent back the deposed bishops to the East and

restored each to his own Church.⁴ This led, according to Socrates, to the Easterns' convening the Council of Antioch which replied to Julius' letters. Constantius became enraged when he heard that Paul had again taken possession of his see and ordered Philip, the Praetorian Prefect, to drive out Paul from his Church and to install Macedonius in his place.⁵ This led to a terrible massacre of 3,150 people, after a panic among the populace and soldiers, which is referred to in the Eastern Encyclical from Serdica.⁶ Sabinus, the author of the *Συναγωγή τῶν συνοδικῶν* — one of Socrates' sources — was a supporter of Macedonius. Paul however escaped in the confusion to Thessalonica from where he went again to Italy.⁷ Socrates then records the mission of three (not four) Eastern bishops to the Western Emperor to explain the reason for the deposition of Paul and Athanasius.⁸ After a further three years the Eastern bishops held another Synod which drew up the Long-lined Creed (*μακρόστιχος*) which they transmitted to Italy. The Western bishops however refused to receive this Creed, 'on account of their being of another language'⁹ and not understanding it, saying that the **Nicaeanum** was sufficient and that they would not go beyond it. The result was that Paul and Athanasius then demanded that another ecumenical Council should be convened to settle their cases and other questions of faith.¹⁰ So a general Council, according to Socrates, was summoned to meet at Serdica by the joint authority of Constans and Constantius and this met in the eleventh year after the death of Constantine and during the consulship of Rufinus and Eusebius, i.e. 347. He quotes carelessly Athanasius' statement that three-hundred bishops were present at Serdica or subscribed to it afterwards as 'according to the statement of Athanasius about three hundred bishops from the western parts of the Empire were present';¹¹ and Sabinus states that seventy-six came from the East.¹² Because of the infirmity of certain Eastern bishops, and the shortness of the notice for the Council which some Easterns blamed on Julius, eighteen months had elapsed between the summons of the Emperors and the actual meeting at Serdica. Socrates then says that the Easterns refused to meet with the Western bishops unless Athanasius and Paul were first excluded. When negotiations broke down they returned to Philippopolis where they held a separate 'Counter' Council, anathematized the **homoousios** and adopted the **anomoios** (i.e. that the 'Son is unlike the Father') which they introduced into their letters which they sent in all directions. The Western group however remained at Serdica, excommunicated the Eastern leaders, confirmed the **Nicaeanum**, rejected the **anomoios** and inserted in their letters addressed to all the Churches the doctrine of consubstantiality. The Westerns then restored Paul, Athanasius, Marcellus and the other deposed bishops to their sees — although Socrates notes that Eusebius of Caesarea had written three books against Marcellus which quoted Marcellus' own words to prove that he had asserted, with Sabellius, that the Lord was a mere man.¹³ Constans, on being informed of the Western decisions of Serdica, begged his brother to restore Paul and Athanasius to their sees and Socrates even quotes a threatening letter, allegedly addressed by Constans to his brother, on this

matter.¹⁴ Constans accordingly sent Paul back to Constantinople fortified with the imperial letters and those of the Council of Serdica.¹⁵ Athanasius however had to wait longer for re-instatement in his see.

We have summarized Socrates' narrative at some length in order to illustrate its particular emphases. The narrative is at considerable variance with other, and particularly with contemporary, sources. Socrates gives a major place to Paul of Constantinople in the events surrounding Serdica and sometimes even names him before Athanasius as a person of considerable significance; so the Council itself was convened at his and Athanasius' request. Against this reading of events is the total silence of all the Encyclical letters emanating from the Western assembly at Serdica concerning Paul, which is strange if he had been present and had played a significant part in its proceedings. Moreover the Eastern Encyclical, which has several references to Paul, never suggests he was present at Serdica. It however makes the telling point that Paul had himself condemned Athanasius (late—335 or early—336) at a Council in Constantinople which had exiled Athanasius,¹⁶ and also pours scorn on Protogenes, bishop of Serdica, who had once anathematized Paul and Marcellus, but who had later received them into communion.¹⁷ It is however significant that the Eastern Encyclical does not excommunicate Paul, as it did Athanasius, Marcellus, Julius, Ossius and other Western leaders, confining itself to a mention of the murders of Paul — the Emperor himself having condemned Paul because of his guilt in the revolt at Constantinople. Nevertheless the Encyclical does seek to prejudice the minds of its recipients against Paul without however placing him in the same class as Athanasius and Marcellus.

The silence of the Western bishops at Serdica concerning Paul suggests that, by 343, his case was considered hopeless and that his involvement in civil strife at Constantinople could not be defended (in this the bishops may have had in mind the fact that Constantius was a joint-convenor of the Council). Why then did Socrates place such emphasis on Paul, presenting him as a major figure in bringing about the Council of Serdica and being present there, in view of the fact that Socrates knew Athanasius' *Apologia contra Arianos* and therefore must have known that he was not named in any contemporary Western source? W. Telfer argued that the value of Socrates' account depends solely on his sources; in addition to Athanasius Telfer believes that these were a Novatianist document (N); Sabinus' *Συναγωγή τῶν συνοδικῶν*, which Socrates regards as biased towards Arianism;¹⁸ a chronicle which contained, among other matters, the names of the consuls (2,13); and also a source representative of the Western bishops' views of their controversy with the East.¹⁹ This last source (a counterblast to the Eastern Encyclical) contained the supposed letter of Constans to Constantius, the misdating of Serdica to 347 and, according to Telfer, 'does not seem to have been a document of much historical reliability'.²⁰ Telfer's analysis of Socrates' sources is however based largely on conjecture and has little to commend it. Apart from Socrates' use of Athanasius and Sabinus we have to admit that we know

little about his sources. His concentration on the Paul saga may simply be due to the fact that he himself emanated from Constantinople, where he spent his whole life, and he may have wished to vindicate and rehabilitate Paul whom he regards as a notable figure of the same stature as Athanasius; or he could be reacting against the prejudice against Paul in the Eastern Serdica Encyclical although we cannot be certain that he knew this letter. In any event history is sacrificed to an **a priori** view of what had happened in the stormy years surrounding the Council of Serdica. Historically it is likely that Paul had been abandoned by the West by 343, his case being overshadowed by the more significant cases of Athanasius and Marcellus. Similarly Socrates' statement that the Eastern bishops, after their withdrawal from Serdica, held a separate Council at Philippopolis at which they adopted the **anomoios**, as against the **homoeousios**, is based on a reading back of later doctrinal positions into an earlier period. There is no contemporary evidence that the majority of the Eastern bishops at Serdica wished to overthrow the **Niceanum** or that it had yet become a theological battle ground — that did not happen until the 350's. Socrates' carelessness is also shown by his statement that the **anomoios** position was inserted in all epistles addressed to the Churches²¹ — whereas the Eastern assembly at Serdica drew up only one Encyclical letter which did not deal with such doctrinal matters. The placing of the Macrostich or 'Long-lined' Creed **before** Serdica, essential on Socrates' chronology, seriously distorts the doctrinal history of the period.

A recurring emphasis in Socrates' **Church History** is that troubles in the Church are closely connected with troubles in the affairs of the State. So Socrates says he writes in order to lay before his readers an exact statement of facts, but secondly:

'In order that the minds of the readers might not become satiated with the repetition of the contentious disputes of bishops, and their insidious designs against one another; but more especially that it might be made apparent, that whenever the affairs of the State were disturbed, those of the Church, as if by some vital sympathy, became disordered also Sometimes the affairs of the Church come first in order; then commotions in the State follow, and sometimes the reverse, so that I cannot believe this invariable interchange is merely fortuitous, but am persuaded that it proceeds from our iniquities'.²²

An illustration as to how this 'sympathy' between Church and State was worked out historically is provided by Socrates in his chronology of the events surrounding Serdica. By placing the Council wrongly in the year 347 Socrates rearranges the course of events to fit his theory of a connexion between disasters in the State and those in the Church. In 347 Athanasius, according to Socrates, routed his enemies at Serdica and, with the backing of Constans, returned to his Alexandrian see. Then in 350 came a dramatic reversal when disastrous events occurred in State and Church.²³ The Persians attacked in the East and civil commotions occurred in the West. The tyrant Magnentius slew the Western Emperor Constans and Constan-

tius changed his position with the result that Athanasius and defenders of the **Nicaeanum** were violently attacked. Paul of Constantinople was strangled; Lucius of Adrianople died in prison in chains and Athanasius was forced to flee — a dramatic reversal of fortunes. This was solely due to the troubled times and disastrous events of the year 350 which disturbed the sequence of historical events in both Church and State.²⁴ It is of course likely that Socrates' source recorded that the Council of Serdica took place in 347 in the eleventh year after Constantine's death. Once he accepted that Socrates was free to adjust events to fit his theory of 'sympathy' between State and Church. However once Serdica is dated to 343 Socrates' theory collapses. There is, in fact, no necessary connexion between disorders in the State and Church although sometimes these may coincide. However in the fourth century historians and others were under the influence of Constantine's belief that the Unity of the Church ran parallel to, and was a concomitant of, the Unity of the State. It is not without significance that Socrates was a continuator of the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, the great apologist for Constantine.

In contrast to Socrates' somewhat cavalier treatment of the events surrounding Serdica we turn to the more sober version of Sozomen in his **Church History**.²⁵ Sozomen, like Socrates, was a lawyer in Constantinople although he had come to the Greek capital c. 425, or at a slightly later date, from a provincial background in Palestine. Like Socrates, a lay Christian, he was not apparently deeply interested in theological matters and became exasperated with the machinations of bishops: 'and further, be it remembered, these rulers (i.e. bishops) convened Councils and issued what decrees they pleased, often condemning unheard those whose creed was dissimilar to their own, and striving to their utmost to induce the reigning prince and nobles of the time to side with them'.²⁶ Sozomen knew and used Socrates' **Church History** as is shown by his quotation of an anecdote concerning Constantine which Socrates had reproduced with the statement that the story had never before appeared in a written record. Sozomen gives no source for this anecdote which he must therefore have copied from Socrates' account.²⁷ The literary dependence between the two authors is considerable although Sozomen also used independently some of the sources which Socrates had used. In particular he had studied Athanasius' works direct²⁸ which he used in preference to Socrates' account and this is of significance in considering Sozomen's account of the events surrounding the Council of Serdica.

Like Socrates Sozomen gives a considerable place to Paul of Constantinople in his account. However, unlike Socrates, he is not blind to Paul's failings: 'Events proved that he was not competent to combat the casualties of life, or to hold intercourse with those in power; for he was never successful in subverting the machinations of his enemies, like those who are adroit in the management of affairs'.²⁹ In his account of the Dedication Council of Antioch of 341 Sozomen uses Socrates' account but introduces independent material of his own from Athanasius, **De Synodis** 22-5. However, as with Socrates, Sozomen regards troubles in the

State and natural disasters as intimately connected with troubles in the Church. Thus he notes that the devastation of Western Gaul by the Franks and the tremendous earthquake in the East, and particularly at Antioch, occurred around the time of the Arian Gregory's intrusion into the see of Alexandria accompanied by a large body of soldiers.³⁰ Sozomen, following Socrates closely, states that Paul of Constantinople was at Rome at the same time as Athanasius, Marcellus and Asclepas and that Paul was re-instated to his see by Julius. However it is significant that, unlike Socrates, Sozomen does not state that Paul personally (with Athanasius) was involved in requesting Constans to convene the Council of Serdica. He merely says that, after Constans had unsuccessfully requested his brother to re-instate the followers of Athanasius in their sees, the **party** of Athanasius and Paul entreated Constans to assemble a Council.³¹ Sozomen's careful use of his sources is shown by the fact that he nowhere states that Paul was present at the Council of Serdica, as Socrates does. He therefore had noted from Athanasius' account that Paul is not mentioned in any of the Western Encyclical letters as having been at Serdica. Sozomen simply states that the Eastern bishops confirmed the sentences already enacted against Athanasius, Paul, Marcellus and Asclepas and that they deposed Julius, Ossius, Maximin, Protogenes and Gaudentius which information he no doubt derived directly from the Greek version of the Eastern Encyclical letter. Regarding the negotiations at Serdica Sozomen preserves independent information which appears to be historically reliable. Thus he states that the Eastern bishops assembled at Philippopolis before the Council and wrote from there to the Western bishops, who had already arrived at Serdica, saying that they would not meet with them unless Athanasius' followers were ejected from their assembly.³² Sozomen has no mention of the 'Counter Council of Philippopolis' which Socrates says met after the Easterns had withdrawn from Serdica. Sozomen's account of the Western assembly is also fuller and more accurate than Socrates' account and appears to be based on a careful study of his sources. After giving a summary of the Western Encyclical letter Sozomen states that the Orthodox bishops agreed to a Creed, larger than the Nicene, which Ossius and Protogenes assured Julius was not intended to supersede the **Nicaeanum**.³³ However like Socrates Sozomen dated the Council to 347 although he avoids placing the **Macrostich** before Serdica with its attendant difficulties. He makes the interesting and historically correct point that the majority of Eastern bishops were not anti-Nicene or Arians, which he could not have deduced from Athanasius' writings. This must therefore represent Sozomen's considered judgement on the events surrounding Serdica and is worth quoting at length:

'As to the Eastern Church, although it had been racked by dissension since the time of the Council of Antioch, and although it had already openly differed from the Nicene form of belief, yet I think it is true that the opinion of the majority united in the same thought, and confessed the Son to be of the substance of the Father. There were some, however, who were fond of wrangl-

ing and battled against the **homooousios**; for those who had been opposed to the word from the beginning thought, as I infer, and as happens to most people, that it would be a disgrace to appear as conquered. Others were finally convinced of the truth of the doctrines concerning God, by the habit of frequent disputation on these themes, and ever afterwards continued firmly attached to them. Others again, being aware that contentions ought not to arise, inclined toward that which was gratifying to each of the sides, on account of the influence, either of friendship or they were swayed by the various causes which often induce men to embrace what they ought to reject, and to act without boldness, in circumstances which require thorough conviction. Many others, accounting it absurd to consume their time in altercations about words, quietly adopted the sentiments inculcated by the Council of Nicaea'.³⁴

Sozomen's account of Serdica is of considerable historical worth and is based on a careful use of earlier sources. He omits and corrects some of the glaring inaccuracies of Socrates' account which he had read. While he has a fear of heresy and above all desired the Unity of the Church he believed that Emperors should allow Church Councils to reach their decisions in freedom and then should support the Conciliar Decrees.³⁵ Emperors should be neutral figures and not involved in factional struggles within the Church (or for that matter within the State). While Socrates spoke of Constantius as an outright Arian Sozomen tried to defend him by arguing that the Eastern Emperor was a follower of the **homoiousios**, and not an extreme Arian: 'It is not surprising that the Emperor Constantius was induced to adopt the use of the term **homoiousios**, for it was admitted by many priests who conformed to the doctrines of the Nicene Council'.³⁶ Sozomen tried not to take sides in theological disputes. However this did not lead him into an insipid neutrality concerning the deeper issues behind the Council of Serdica. While he emphasises the wide spectrum of belief at this time in both East and West he notes that nevertheless the Nicene doctrines were firmly and openly maintained, not only by Athanasius but by a great multitude of monks, including the venerable Antony of Egypt and by others in Egypt and elsewhere in the Eastern Roman Empire.³⁷ The fact that the monks adhered to the Nicene faith carried great weight with Sozomen for a major feature of his treatment of the history of the Church was the importance he ascribed to the monastic movement which he greatly admired.

The third ancient Church historian to deal with Serdica, although briefly, was Theodoret of Cyrus who, unlike Socrates and Sozomen, was a considerable theologian in his own right. Theodoret was born in Antioch c. 393, later entered the monastic life and in 423 became bishop of Cyrus, a small Syrian town. Theodoret was a supporter of the Antiochene position in the Christological struggle which had begun with the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril of Alexandria. Between 441 and 449 Theodoret wrote his **Church History**³⁸ covering the period from 323 to 428 and designed

as a continuation of Eusebius' work. However Theodoret does not allow his support for the Antiochene position to affect his presentation of the history of the Church in material matters, although he does defend Eustathius of Antioch and presents his accusers as immoral persons,³⁹ whereas Socrates had presented Eustathius as an evil speaker who had insulted the great Origen.⁴⁰ However the Arian controversy baulked large in Theodoret's mind and his **Church History** presents Arianism as the main issue of the period covered by his work. He believed that the Antiochene two-nature Christology could grapple with the problem of Arianism but that the Alexandrian one-nature Christology would simply plunge back the Church into doctrinal chaos — although Theodoret did not, of course, equate Alexandrian Christology with Arianism.

Theodoret's account of the events surrounding the Council of Serdica is brief. The calling of Serdica was, he holds, due to Athanasius alone who went to Constans, complained of the plots of the Arians, reminded Constans of his father Constantine who had attended the Council of Nicaea in person and had been present at its debates. This moved Constans to emulate his father's zeal and write to Constantius exhorting him to preserve inviolate the religion of their father 'for by piety he made his Empire great, destroyed the tyrants of Rome, and subjugated the foreign nations on every side'.⁴¹ Constantius (rather than Constans), according to Theodoret, then summoned the bishops of East and West to Serdica to deliberate on ways of ending dissensions in the Church. Theodoret, unlike Socrates and Sozomen, does not introduce Paul of Constantinople into his account (who had been accused by 'unsound' Arians) until Serdica had already been convened. He states that the Constantinopolitan populace would not permit Paul to go to Serdica as they feared the machinations of his enemies.⁴² The result was that the Arians procured an edict of banishment against Paul who was duly exiled to Cucusus in Lesser Armenia. There he was strangled by Philip the prefect who, with other Arians, had pursued him.⁴³ Theodoret here telescopes a complicated history covering several years into a short passage, although he is historically correct in recording, against Socrates, the fact that Paul did not attend the Council of Serdica. Theodoret then states that two-hundred and fifty bishops attended Serdica 'as is proved by ancient records'.⁴⁴ This figure is unsupported elsewhere and we cannot now discover where Theodoret got his information. His account of the Council itself is very brief recording only the bare fact of the presence of Athanasius and other bishops in the Western assembly and noting that the calumniators and Arian leaders would not enter the Council but fled away. However Theodoret does quote *in toto* the Western Encyclical letter in a version close to that of Athanasius, **Apologia contra Arianos** omitting only the signatures appended to Athanasius' version. In addition he adds the Creed adopted by the Western assembly at the instigation of Ossius and Protogenes which we have already discussed in some detail.⁴⁵ We have seen that this long, rambling, imprecise, polemical document was, in all probability, the official Creed of the Western Council and was drawn up in the light of the

activities of Valens and Ursacius and also, by asserting a single hypostasis in the Godhead, to controvert Eastern teaching of three hypostases, i.e. any form of Origenism. However it is noticeable that, unlike the other historians, Theodoret only gives the Western Serdica viewpoint and totally ignores the Eastern Encyclical and Creed, no doubt because of his antipathy towards Arianism. The events after Serdica are also only briefly mentioned by Theodoret. Constans, he says, chose two bishops who had attended the Council to carry letters to his brother in company with a military commander, Salianus. These letters, according to Theodoret, contained menaces and ordered Constantius to restore Athanasius to Alexandria — otherwise Constans would do this himself in person if his brother would not acquiesce. Constantius however meekly agreed to carry out Constans' order.⁴⁶ Theodoret then records in great detail, probably from local information, the account of the plot of Stephen, bishop of Antioch, to discredit the emissary bishops Euphrates and Vincentius — a plot which backfired.⁴⁷ Triumphantly he gives the three letters of Constantius to Athanasius revealing the Emperor's **volte face** on the Athanasius issue.⁴⁸

Theodoret's account of Serdica is less full than that of Socrates and Sozomen and is inferior in historical detail and chronological arrangement. As a historian he lacks perspective giving much space to minor incidents, such as the Stephen scandal, while telescoping events of high importance into a few verses. Edward Gibbon spoke of the three Church historians we have discussed in this chapter as 'Socrates, the more curious Sozomen, and the learned Theodoret'. However in regard to the Council of Serdica there can be little doubt that 'the more curious Sozomen' is the only one of the three whose account can be used **in toto**, although with caution, as a historical source.⁴⁹ In spite of historical insight here and there Socrates' account is so inaccurate as to render it largely worthless to the historian while Theodoret's brevity and lack of perspective denied him any grasp of the significance of the Council as revealing, in Gibbon's words, 'the first symptoms of discord and schism between the Greek and Latin Churches, which were separated by the accidental difference of faith, and the permanent distinction of language'.⁵⁰

CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSION

The decisions of the Western Orthodox Council of Serdica concerning the re-admission of Athanasius and his fellow bishops to communion and their re-instatement to their sees could not be brought into effect unless the Eastern Emperor, Constantius, accepted the Western decisions. So the Council drafted a bold letter to the Eastern Emperor imploring him to agree to the bishops' return from exile:

Et hoc obsecramus pietatem tuam, ut eos, qui adhuc — egregii videlicet sacerdotes, qui tanti nominis praepollent dignitate — aut in exilio aut in desertis locis tenentur, iubeas ad sedes suas remeare, ut ubique grata libertas sit iucunda laetitia.¹

This letter was to be delivered to Constantius in person by a delegation of bishops and was apparently supported by a letter from Constans himself who re-inforced the Western plea by adding his personal legate to the party. The delegation comprising Euphrates, bishop of Cologne, Vicentius bishop of Capua and Salianus, a military commander, left for Antioch early in the spring of the 344 and arrived there before Easter.² The precise contents of Constans' letter are unknown but it had the effect of bringing about a change in Constantius' policy. Immediately after Serdica the Eastern Emperor had inflicted severe reprisals on certain Eastern bishops and clergy who had been present at the Western Council.³ Although no letter has survived from the Eastern Council to Constantius giving their decisions there is no doubt that the Emperor heard of these from the Eastern leaders, with whom he was in close contact, and so initially he was in no mood to relax his persecution of Western supporters. However the pressure exerted by Constans brought about a change due to Constantius' realising that, weakened as he was by the ravages of the Persian war, his brother was politically in a very strong position. His change of policy was also facilitated by the scandal surrounding Stephen of Antioch, one of the leaders of the Eastern bishops at Serdica, who had devised a plot to discredit the Western envoys which failed lamentably, resulting in Stephen being deposed from his see and his replacement by Leontius who again had Arian sympathies.⁴ Constantius then agreed to release certain Alexandrian presbyters and deacons who had been banished to Armenia and he wrote to Alexandria commanding that Athanasius' supporters should not suffer further persecution.⁵ But as yet he made no move in respect of Athanasius, Marcellus and Asclepas who remained in exile. Sozomen and Socrates state that Constans then wrote again to Constantius in

threatening tone demanding the re-instatement of Athanasius and the other bishops.⁶ This may well contain a germ of historical truth as certainly pressure by Constans, rather than any change in theological beliefs or capitulation to the Western bishops, moved Constantius. So immediately after Gregory of Cappadocea's death on 25 June 345 Constantius wrote to Athanasius in a very friendly tone inviting him to return to his see⁷ — this was not due to any real change of heart towards Athanasius but because of 'the affection I entertained towards my brother of divine and pious memory'.⁸ We have already mentioned, in considering the Serdica Creeds, that the Eastern bishops themselves were at this time making conciliatory moves towards the West. A delegation of four bishops carried the 'Macrostich'⁹ to Milan which was in essence the creed of the Easterns adopted at Serdica, i.e. the fourth Antioch creed plus anathemas, with a series of seven sections explaining at length the meaning of the anathemas. These sections avoid the use of the words **hypostasis** and **ousia** and the formula 'three hypostases in the Godhead' which had caused trouble in the past. Although the independent existence of the Son and Spirit is affirmed the Macrostich emphasises the Unity of the Father and Son — as if to allay Western suspicions of tritheism. And, as was usual with Eastern Creeds, the teaching of Marcellus was roundly condemned and he was relegated to the company of the Jews and Paul of Samosata. Unfortunately the Western bishops made no response to this gesture and the Easterns were met with a blank rejection apart from the West's agreeing to condemn Marcellus' disciple, Photinus,¹⁰ whose extravagant teaching had become too much for both East and West. Otherwise the Westerns demanded that the Easterns totally renounce belief in 'three hypostases', i.e. any form of Origenist belief, which the four bishops could not agree to do — although in practice they were prepared to drop the term. The Westerns were in no mood to compromise sensing that, with Constans in the ascendancy, they could win outright.

Athanasius responded warily to Constantius' change of heart ignoring the first letter from the Eastern Emperor and only moving after second and third letters had been received.¹¹ **Fortunam reverenter habet.** As yet he had no promise that the decisions of Tyre would be legally revoked and that was what he wanted. From Aquileia, where he was staying, Athanasius went to the court at Trèves, then to Rome to bid farewell to Julius, who gave him a congratulatory letter for the clergy and laity of Alexandria. Athanasius then travelled slowly to Antioch where he was received in audience by Constantius. He wisely requested that his accusers should be summoned so that he could clear himself of all the charges against him, i.e. another Council should be held.¹² This is significant and suggests that Athanasius had learnt from his failure in 338 to have his return to Alexandria legitimized by a Council, **In bello non licet bis errare.** He now realised that, if the attitude of the Emperor changed (and he was suspicious that it might), he would be without defence unless his position had been confirmed by a Council which had revoked his deposition at Tyre. Constantius however politely refused this — an indication that he

knew about the Eastern bishops insistence on the irreversibility of the decisions of Councils and, in any case, had a mind of his own — but assured Athanasius of his protection handing him a document granting his return to his Church and removing the legal disabilities under which his followers suffered. The Emperor wrote also to the bishops and people of the Catholic Church, i.e. in the Eastern Empire, to Alexandria and to Nestorius, Prefect of Egypt and others along the same lines.¹³ The letters of Constantius are couched in religious phraseology — Athanasius' return is the 'Will of the Most High', the decision is guided by Providence and its object is 'to preserve continually that unanimity and peace according to the order of the Church which is at the same time becoming in you, and most advantageous to us'.¹⁴ From Antioch Athanasius passed through Syria and Palestine and received a royal welcome in Jerusalem where a Council of sixteen bishops, headed by Maximus the bishop there, welcomed him and sent him on his way with congratulatory letters.¹⁵ This Council was important for Athanasius who believed that at last he had received the approval of Eastern bishops which had been denied him at Serdica. However it appears that Maximus had to endure rebukes from some opponents of this Council, possibly led by Acacius of Caesarea, whose name is not mentioned in the list of bishops who supported Athanasius in Jerusalem. However undismayed Athanasius went on his way and re-took possession of his see on 21 October 346 after seven-and-a-half years exile. The welcome he received in the Egyptian metropolis even put into the shade those usually accorded to Emperors.¹⁶ Thus the decision of the Western Council of Serdica bore fruit some three-and-a-half years later and it seemed to be the dawn of a new age with the decisions of the Eastern Council for the time being forgotten. However the uneasy truce was not destined to last for many Eastern bishops were unhappy at the **volte face** of the Emperor. The theological issues moreover remained unsolved and Western determination to outlaw the 'three hypostases' belief was undimmed — notwithstanding the tacit Eastern agreement to drop the use of the term. But there was progress on the vexed question of Marcellus of Ancyra who, to East, both before and immediately after Serdica remained an **enfant terrible** and a major bone of contention. Athanasius, while retaining Church fellowship with him, quietly dropped Marcellus on the grounds that he had supported Photinus, his extreme follower.¹⁷ These were the conditions which Constantius required in exchange for Athanasius' being allowed to return to his see. Peace might have come if the jurisdictional issues of the bishops' depositions had been the only ones dividing East from West and if the West had acknowledged that not all Easterns were Arians, many being moderate conservatives. What was needed was a period of political stability during which confidence could have been built up between Athanasius and the Easterns and hardened positions allowed to mellow. However this was not to be for in 350 peace was broken by news that a revolt had broken out in Gaul, that Magnentius, a Germanic general, had proclaimed himself Emperor at Autun, and that Constans had fled and had committed suicide, or been

assassinated, in a Pyrenees village.

This **volte face** had momentous consequences for the Church. It was only too obvious that the removal of the pro-Western, Catholic Constans would profoundly change the ecclesiastical scene and that Constantius, freed from the influence of his brother, might return to a pro-Arian position. However at first Magnentius appeared to be in the ascendancy and seemed to the populace to be a liberator from the worst aspects of Constans' rule. Although a pagan Magnentius allowed the symbol of Christ to appear on coins and sought to build up his power by wooing Athanasius in Alexandria through envoys. Athanasius was later to deny that he had ever written to Magnentius in his own hand — although there are indications that he did at this time.¹⁸ Constantius too was not inactive and confirmed Athanasius in his office assuring him of his support¹⁹ notwithstanding rumours, spread by Athanasius' enemies, that he would be driven from his see. Soon however political events took a more sombre turn for the struggle between Magnentius and Constantius could not be long delayed. Making use of a respite on the Persian front Constantius turned to the West and on 28 September 351 won a desperate battle against Magnentius at Mursa. The Eastern Emperor was supported by Valens, bishop of Mursa, who had prayed fervently for his victory and who became Constantius' theological adviser. Valens was a strong opponent of Athanasius and, once Constantius was sole Emperor (from 353), this boded ill for the bishop of Alexandria. The Emperor now turned against Athanasius — a sure indication that his earlier support for him was only due to tactical considerations, viz. the ascendancy of Constans in the political sphere. Councils were held at Arles (353) and Milan (355) at which Constantius extracted from frightened bishops a condemnation of Athanasius — effective resistance only being provided by Lucifer of Cagliari, Eusebius of Vercellae, Hilary of Poitiers and Liberius, bishop of Rome from 352 all of whom were sent into exile. Hilary, in particular, proved a noble defender of the Western position and tried to rally resistance in Gaul. However he too fell at a Council held at Béziers in Southern Gaul in 356 and he was duly exiled by Constantius to the East.²⁰ Athanasius was now defenceless and no voice spoke in his favour from Africa to Syria, from Rome to Alexandria; the storm finally broke in February 356 when a force of soldiers installed the Arian George as his successor in the Alexandrian see and he was forced to flee to the desert where he was hidden by the monks. Thus ended the 'golden decade' (346-356) of the Egyptian patriarch; now all that was left was to give vent from his hiding place to his feelings against Constantius, to write the history of the Arian conflict and to portray the sufferings of the orthodox during the ascendancy of the 'mad Arians'. So the wheel had once more turned full circle. In 346 it seemed the decisions of the Western Serdica Council had been partly vindicated; in 356 the decisions of the Council of Tyre, reaffirmed so vigorously by the Eastern Council of Serdica, seemed once more to have won the day. Not until the theological work of the Capodocian Fathers was orthodoxy finally to triumph in the Roman Empire.

What was the ultimate cause of division in the ancient Church the account of which has occupied so much of this book? The Council of Serdica is of importance in that there East and West separated by conciliar decision for the first time in the Church's history. Serdica was thus a forerunner of the schism which came finally into being in the year 1054 and which has not yet been healed. There were, as is well known, geographical, linguistic, political and cultural differences between Eastern and Western Christendom which made unity more difficult to achieve — particularly after 337 when the Empire split up into three different regions with differing loyalties. The human factor also baulks large in our story. It has been said, not without reason, that human blunders have a greater effect in shaping history than human wickedness and the historian can find support for this judgement in these pages. Athanasius blundered in not convening a Council to readmit him to his see immediately on his return to Alexandria in 338, in view of his condemnation in 335; Julius and Athanasius blundered in accepting the dubious theology of Marcellus of Ancyra for so long, notwithstanding the vacillations of that prelate. The Eastern bishops blundered in portraying Marcellus as the bogeyman **par excellence** when, in truth, his was a lesser figure than Athanasius, at least by the time of Serdica; they blundered in stating so vigorously the doctrine of the irreversibility of the decisions of Councils which effectively blocked any appeal from the decisions of provincial Councils and drove a wedge between East and West. Both sides, particularly the Western, had among their number strong personalities who could not see much good in the position adopted by the other. So Athanasius branded all the Eastern bishops as 'Arians' notwithstanding the fact that a large number were moderate conservatives and far removed from Arius. Reconciliation, which might have been achieved on the basis of the fourth Antioch Creed, foundered on the rock of human arrogance and lack of self scrutiny. Both the Eastern and Western Encyclicals of Serdica are an eloquent testimony to this fact. We are reminded of the truth of Gibbon's generalisation: 'Wherever the spirit of fanaticism, at once so credulous and so crafty, has insinuated itself into a noble mind, it insensibly corrodes the vital principles of virtue and veracity'.

This period was dominated ecclesiastically by the power and authority of bishops. We find nothing in the Serdica documents concerning the religion of the masses of the people. The later Eastern Orthodox belief that the authority of the Church is diffused among all its members, bishops, clergy and people had not yet come into prominence. However the fact that the Eastern bishops, at Serdica, were so wary of the growing power of the Roman see is an indication that one of the characteristic positions of later Orthodoxy, viz. that there is no place in the Christian Church for any special source of infallibility, was already grasped.

The question of the relationship of Church and State also baulks large in our story. The Easterns believed ultimately in a *συνφωνία* between Church and State — one Divine society with the Emperor at its head — and saw no wrong in imperial counts being present at their assemblies;

for the East the Church could rightly be a cultural factor in society and many Eastern bishops went along with whatever Emperor was in the ascendancy. The violent recriminations against 'defectors' to the West had its roots, not only in adverse human reaction, but in the belief that such were upsetting the relation between Church and State. The West, on the other hand, had little experience of 'ecumenical' Councils before Serdica. At Nicaea very few Western bishops had attended and the various Councils in the period leading up to Serdica were mainly Eastern affairs. For nearly one-hundred bishops to attend a Council was a new phenomenon for the West and they had few guidelines to help in working out a relationship with the State. The Church had to proceed experimentally — Serdica was only thirty years after Constantine's conversion — and no **modus vivendi** with the State had yet been achieved. On the whole the West tended to emphasise separateness from the State in matters of practice and doctrine — and the question of Church Unity embraced both. Hence the Western bishops at Serdica asserted their independence by not having imperial legates at their assembly. This divergence between East and West — which should not however be over-emphasised — was complicated by the masterful personality of Athanasius who sided with the West, rather than the East. It is possible that behind this was a decline in Greek cultural influence in Egypt, quite apart from doctrinal questions.²² Athanasius' relations with the Emperors form such a large part of the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century that we have examined these more fully in Appendix B. where reasons are given for doubting whether Athanasius' goal was a complete dualistic severance of Church and State.

The massive struggle for positions of ecclesiastical power which went on between 325 and 343, and which is nakedly revealed in the Encyclical letters of the two sides, was exacerbated by the rise to pre-eminence of the Roman see. Julius' intervention in the dispute with the Eusebians set a precedent for more far-reaching developments and the 'appeal' Canons of the Western Serdica Council fit into this development. Fear of a Western 'papacy' was a potent factor in Eastern reaction to the West's having received into communion bishops previously deposed by a legitimate Eastern Council. Similarly the West feared the development of an ecclesiastical power-structure based on Constantinople or Antioch.

Jurisdictional issues also loomed large at Serdica and these have been considered by some scholars to be the sole *raison d'être* of the Council. It is true that deep issues of Canon Law were at stake and the Easterns had good reason to doubt the good faith of the West. The fact that Athanasius and Marcellus were present at the Western Council and that Ossius, quite calmly, could invite the Eastern leaders to come to a 'trial' shows that the West had little understanding of Eastern feelings. Similarly the Eastern view of the irreversibility of the decisions of Councils, so blatantly put forward, suggested that the Council of Rome of early 341, small though it was, had no validity.

However more important, in our judgement, than the factors so far considered were the theological questions dividing East and West. The

Unity of the Church, so ardently desired by Constantine as integral to his vision of a unified Empire, was itself a theological question with a long history behind it. Again although the **homoousios** was not a theological factor at Serdica the terms **ousia** and **hypostasis** most certainly were. The doctrine of a single hypostasis in the Godhead, propounded by the Westerns at Serdica, did not simply exclude tritheism (which few Easterns held) but undercut the whole history of Eastern theology since Origen.²³ The West did not realise this and, even after Serdica, the adamant refusal to allow Easterns to drop the doctrine of the three hypostases shows how little understanding of Eastern theology existed in the West. It was to be many years before the relation of the terms **ousia** and **hypostasis** was to be worked out satisfactorily. Similarly the Eastern objection to Marcellus and alleged Western Sabellianism was overplayed. While Marcellus' theology was dubious the doctrine of a single hypostasis in the Godhead was not *per se* Sabellian but designed to guard Christian monotheism. Twenty years later Athanasius himself was to be embarrassed by the doctrine of a single hypostasis and was to speak quite unfairly of the 'tatters of Serdica'.

Thus the Council of Serdica should not be portrayed as the victory of Western Nicene orthodoxy over Eastern Arianism — such a simplification has for too long held the field in certain quarters. This interpretation has been the result of overmuch concentration on Western sources and documents without a corresponding attention having been paid to the few extant Eastern sources. The Eastern Encyclical from Serdica gives the other side of the picture (see Appendix A). On the other hand Athanasius should not be portrayed solely in the role of 'prosecutor' with the Easterns as innocents abroad, as in the work of Richard Klein.²⁴ This again is a simplification which does not quite do justice to the complexity of the situation. At Serdica the visible Unity of the Church came to grief on a combination of theology and ecclesiastical politics, and for the first time in the history of the Church, formal schism ensued. Today, when a desire for a visibly united Church is ardently desired in many quarters, we should do well to ponder the lessons of the past. In seeking this Unity we need to remember that deep theological questions are involved and no solution, however practical, which ignores these is likely to be of any permanent value.

The deeper significance of historical events is not always perceived by those involved in them at the time. By the early 380's a Christian Empire had come into being under the rule of the Emperor Theodosius and the period during which Church and State had been slowly working out a viable relationship had ended. By then Athanasius, who had died in 373, had become a legend and a symbol of Orthodoxy and of an unconquerable Church. The significance of his theological position was not perceived at the time of the Council of Serdica owing to the harsh passions aroused by the methods he used in fighting the East. However on a longer view of history Athanasius' insistence on the Unity of God and the Logos-Christ, which at Serdica was thought to be imperilled by

the three hypostases teaching of the East, must be pronounced a true insight. Without that Christianity could have become a type of philosophy and the Church a mere appendage of the State. It was Athanasius' greatness to have perceived this and to have fought for it so tenaciously over long years. It was due to ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ, as he was called, that Orthodoxy finally triumphed, notwithstanding the spirit of fanaticism so evident in the record of his life. We will conclude with the tribute of Edward Gibbon, a not uncritical Roman historian: 'Amidst the storms of persecution, the archbishop of Alexandria was patient of labour, jealous of fame, careless of safety; and although his mind was tainted by the contagion of fanaticism, Athanasius displayed a superiority of character and abilities which would have qualified him, far better than the degenerate sons of Constantine, for the government of a great monarchy He preserved a distinct and unbroken view of a scene which was incessantly shifting, and never failed to improve those decisive moments which are irrevocably past before they are perceived by a common eye'.²⁵

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. **Kirche und Staat in 4. Jahrhundert**, Bonn (1970) 9. On the earlier Christian attitude to the State see E. Peterson, **Der Monotheismus als Politisches Problem**, Leipzig (1935) and G. H. Williams, 'Christology and Church-State Relations in the Fourth Century', **CH** 20, 3 (1951) 3-6.
2. **Contra Gentes** 38 and 43. On the disharmonies of the Empire M. Grant, **The Fall of the Roman Empire — A Reappraisal**, London (1976) 310-14.
3. **Laus Constantini** 2.
4. Eusèbe de Césarée et la naissance de la théorie 'Cesaropapiste', **Byz** 42 (1972) 131-95.
5. A. Grillmeier, **Christ in Christian Tradition**,² London and Oxford (1975) 261-2. Constantine's use of 'aeon' as 'divine counsel or will' has affinities with the **Hermetica**. The Emperor held that the divine spirit dwelt in the **sarx** of Christ, and so could suffer while the Godhead remained impassible; H. Kraft, **Kaiser Konstantius religiöse Entwicklung**, Tübingen (1955) Letter 20, 4, 266.
6. **HE** 2, 2, 30-33, 35.
7. Cf. also **Cod. Theod.** 1, 13, 7 where an eternal name may refer to Anthusa.
8. A. Alföldi, **The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome**, Oxford (1948) 59, 131.
9. Socrates **HE** 1, 16; see further R. Janin, **Constantinople Byzantine**,² Paris (1964) and G. Dagron, **Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451**, Paris (1974).
10. J. H. Smith, **Constantine the Great**, London (1971) 233. For an opposite point of view H. Dörries, **Constantine the Great**, New York (1972) 186 who portrays the Emperor as a convinced Christian and an apostle of freedom. Dörries however does not discuss the meaning of 'freedom' in the fourth century. H. Chadwick, 'Conversion in Constantine The Great', **Studies in Church History** 15, Oxford (1978) 1-13 argues that Constantine's policy of Church Unity was consistent with a toleration of paganism. For a similar view that the Emperor followed a policy of co-existence of paganism and Christianity H. A. Drake, **In Praise of Constantine**, California (1976) 3-79.
11. **de Vita Const.** 4, 70-1.
12. N. H. Baynes, 'Eusebius and the Christian Empire', **Mélanges Bidez** Brussels (1934) 13-18; F. E. Cranz, 'Kingdom and Polity in Eusebius of Caesarea', **H Th R** 45 (1952) 47-66.
13. **Kirche und Kaiser**, Zürich (1947); W. Schneemelcher **ibid** (n. 1). 23.
14. See Appendix B.
15. Noted by W. Schneemelcher **ibid** (n. 1.) 23.
16. W. Ullmann, 'The Constitutional Significance of Constantine the Great's settlement', **JEH** 27, (1976) 1-16 emphasises Constantine's constitutional position and argues that the Emperor sought to integrate the Church into the Roman legal system so as to turn it into a body politic. This seems to me too tidy a theory. At times during the period 325-337 the Emperor seems almost to act out of desperation rather than carry out a predetermined policy. Against Schneemelcher Ullmann emphasises the differences between East and West expressed in the notions of **Romanitas** and **Christianas**. G. Downey, **The Late Roman Empire**, New York (1969) 120-22 likewise argues that the separation of East and West was but one stage in an ultimate division of two different kinds of civilisation, Greek and Roman, which had never been integrated.
17. Chapter 9.
18. **Optatus, Contra Parmenianum Donatistam** 1, 23-4; W. H. C. Frend, **The Donatist Church**,² Oxford (1971); see further F. Millar, **The Emperor in the Roman World**, London (1977) 595.

19. Eus. **HE** 10, 6, 1-5.
20. Ed. H. von Soden, **Urk. zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Donatismus**² (1950) No. 14.
21. **Acta** of the Council of Arles in E. J. Jonkers, **Acta et Symbola Conciliorum quae saeculo quarto habita sunt**, (1954) 23 ff. cited in F. Millar *ibid* (n. 12) 587. The Council dealt with other questions of ecclesiastical law apart from the Donatist issue.
22. **Urk zur Enst.** (n. 20). No. 23.
23. A. H. M. Jones, **Constantine the Great and the Conversion of Europe** (1943) 111 ff. I am grateful to Mr. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix for this reference and for others concerning Constantine's dealings with the Donatists.
24. **Urk zur Enst.** (no. 10) No. 31.
25. Constantine's view that he was ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ἔκτος, i.e. either overseer of those outside the Church or of all the inhabitants of the Empire would also support his playing a major role in ensuring peace both within and outside the Church. On this famous saying see J. M. Sansterre (*ibid* n. 4) 176; J. Straub, 'Kaiser Konstantin als ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ἔκτος', **Regeneratio Imperii**, Darmstadt (1972), 119 ff., W. Ullmann **JEH** 27, (1976) 12.
26. The best recent study is that of M. Simonetti, **La Crisi Ariana del IV secolo**, Rome (1975) who sees Arianism as essentially a theological debate which began as a conflict within the Origenist tradition.
27. Syriac text, with Greek translation by E. Schwartz in Opitz III, 1, 36-41. Discussion by D. L. Holland, 'Die Synode von Antiochen (325/5) und ihre Bedeutung für Eusebius von Caesarea und das Konzil von Nizäa', **ZKG** 81, (1970) 163-81.
28. **Eastern Encycl.** 25 (**CSEL** 65, 64).
29. Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 43.
30. Chapter 9.
31. Full discussion with relevant bibliography in A. Grillmeier, *ibid* (n. 5) 268-72.
32. Text E. J. Jonkers, *ibid* (n. 21).
33. **Churches and Religions in the People's Republic of Bulgaria**, Synodal Publishing House, Sofia (1975) 92-3.
34. L. W. Barnard, 'Athanasius and the Roman State', **Lat.** 36 (1977) 422-37.
35. On Arius' readmission see Opitz, **Urk.** 29, 30, 31. On the second sitting of Nicaea E. Schwartz, **ZGA**, 204-13.
36. A. Grillmeier, *ibid* (n. 5) 296-301.
37. 'Zur Chronologie des arianischen Streites', **TLZ** 79, (1954) 394-99.
38. **Eastern Encycl.** 11 (**CSEL** 65, 56).
39. *ibid* (n. 37).
40. **Eastern Encycl.** 27 (**CSEL** 65, 66).
41. **ZGA** 177; 'Der s. g. Sermo Major de Fide des Athanasius', **Sitz. Phil. Hist. Kl.** 6 München, (1925) 58-59 but regarded as uncertain by M. Spanneut, **Recherches sur les écrits d'Eustathe d'Antioche**, Lille (1948) 82-4. I owe these references to V. C. de Clercq, **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 361. Jerome and Chrysostom (**De S. Eustathio** 2, **Opp.** 2, 600) place Eustathius' death in Thrace before Julian's recall of the exiles in 362. Theodoret **HE** 3, 4 places it before the consecration of Meletius in 361. Socrates **HE** 4, 14-15 and Sozomen **HE** 6, 13 appear to be mistaken in stating that he was still alive in 370. Athanasius, **De fuga** 3 (c. 356-7) gives no indication of his death although he notices the death of Eutropius in the same list of exiles. He is not mentioned at the Council of Seleucia in 359. Cymatius, with whom Eustathius is linked in the Eastern Encyclical, was alive in 362 (Athanasius, **ad Antiochenos** 19). H. M. Gwatkin, **Studies of Arianism**,² Cambridge (1900) 74 holds that he died c. 356-60. This however is uncertain.
42. On the disputed election L. W. Barnard, 'Two Notes on Athanasius', **OCP** 41 (1975) 344-52.
43. Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 61-2, 68-9.
44. Eus. **Vita Constant.** 4, 42. On the Council of Tyre the two essays of P. Peeters, 'Comment S. Athanase s'enfuit de Tyr en 335', **Acad. roy. de Belgique Bull. de la classe des lettres** 5/30 (1944) 131-77 and L'épilogue du synode de Tyr en 335', **AB** 63 (1945) 131-144 are sharply critical of the chronology proposed by E. Schwartz.
45. H. I. Bell, **Jews and Christians in Egypt**, London (1924) Papyri Nos. 1913-14; W. E. Crum, 'Some further Meletian documents', **JEA** 13 (1927) 19-26.
46. Soz. **HE** 2, 25.

47. Athan. *Apol. c. Arianos* 86.
48. Athanasius took part in an experiment in a mixed economy. From the second century B. C. grain was distributed by the Roman State to the **plebs**. By the time Constantine inaugurated the dole at Constantinople in 332 bread, rather than grain, was used in the daily provision for 80,000 people. Athanasius' enemies claimed that he sold grain intended for Libyan and Egyptian widows (*Apol. c. Arianos* 18.2). State funds were certainly administered in the fourth century by clerics. On this see R. M. Grant, **Early Christianity and Society**, London (1978) 144-5. For a different account of the events surrounding the Council of Tyre see T. D. Barnes, **American Journal of Ancient History** 3 (1978) 62-63 who argues that Athanasius' exile was not consequent on his condemnation at Tyre; however Barnes strangely ignores the charge of interfering with the corn supply.
49. **Eastern Encycl.** 7 (CSEL 65, 54).

CHAPTER 2

1. This is well brought out by H. Lietzmann, **A History of the Early Church Vol. 3: From Constantine to Julian**, London (1961) 184-5.
2. **ZGA**, 269-70.
3. G. J. Hefele, **A History of the Councils of the Church** Vol. 2, Edinburgh (1876) 40; H. Nordberg, 'Athanasius and the Emperor', **CHL**, Helsinki (1963) 33. The distance between Nicomedia and Trèves is also a factor which should be borne in mind.
4. Athan. *Apol. c. Arianos* 87, 4-7; cf. ἐδόθη πρὸ δεκαπεντε καλανδρῶν Ιουλίῳ ἐν Τριβέροις.
5. Theodoret **HE** 2, 1.
6. 'Die Kirchweihsynode von Antiochen 341', **Bonner Festgabe Johannes Straub**, Bonn (1977) 323.
7. **Cod. Theod.** 10, 4; T. Mommsen, **Theodosiani libri** I. 541.
8. I agree with Nordberg *ibid* (n. 3) 37.
9. Opitz, **Urk** 80. The document is mentioned by Socrates **HE** 2, 17, 6; **Encyclical** of Orthodox Council of Serdica ch. 44; Hilary, **Coll. Antiariana Parisina** 3,2 (CSEL 65, 156); **Letter** to Julius (ch. 27). The following documents were added to the **Epistola Encyclica**:
 - (a) Excerpt from the Records of the Prefect (5, 4)
 - (b) Letter of Constantine to Athanasius (ch 68, cf. 9,5)
 - (c) Letter of Alexander of Thessalonica to Count Dionysius (ch. 80, cf. 17, 1)
 - (d) Letter of Ischyra to Athanasius (ch. 64, cf. 17, 1)
 - (e) The protests of the clergy of Alexandria and Mareotis to the Council of Tyre and the commission of enquiry set up by the latter, and also to the Prefect Philagrius (ch. 73-76, cf. 17, 1)
 - (f) Testimonies of the Egyptian and Libyan bishops in respect of the accusations levelled against Athanasius by Constantius, (cf. 19, 1)
 - (g) Letter of the Council of Jerusalem in 335 (ch. 84, cf. 19, 2). In the Encyclical letter reference is also made to a series of additional documents but it is uncertain if these were ever attached to it; cf. Opitz **Apologia Secunda** 89.
10. *Apol. c. Arianos* 20, 1: Ταῦτα μὲν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Αἰγύπτου πρὸς πάντας καὶ πρὸς Ιούλιον τὸν ἐπίσκοπον τῆς Ρώμης.
11. A reconstruction of the chronology of this period is attempted by E. Schwartz (who is largely followed by Opitz and Lietzmann) **ZGA** 265-334. Further corrections by W. Schneemelcher, 'Die Kirchweihsynode von Antiochen' *ibid* (n. 6) 329 ff.
12. A. Grillmeier, **Christ in Christian Tradition**,² London (1975) 276. For recent scholarship M. Tetz, **ZKG** 75 (1964) 217-70; 79 (1968) 3-42; 83, (1972) 145-94; **ZNW** 64 (1973) 75-121; T. E. Pollard, 'Marcellus of Ancyra. A Neglected Father', **Epektasis**, Paris (1972) 187-96.
13. M. Tetz, **ZKG** 75 (1964) 238.
14. M. Tetz, **ZNW** 64 (1973) 114.

15. i.e. Vicentius and Vito.
16. Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 32.
17. Epiphanius, **Pan.** 72 (Holl III); Basil **Epp.** 69, 125, 263, 265; Chrysostom, in **Heb. Hom.** 2,2; Theodoret, **Haer.** 2, 10. The main part of **Oratio c. Arianos**, attributed to Athanasius but of unknown authorship, is directed against Marcellus and his followers. For the Council of Constantinople see A. M. Ritter, **Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol**, Göttingen (1965) 121-3, 191 ff. Cf. also R. Hubner, 'Gregor von Nyssa und Markell von Ankyra', **Écriture et culture philosophique dans la pensée de Gregoire de Nyssa**, Leiden (1971) 212; A. Grillmeier **ibid** (n. 12) 276.
18. **Frag.** 129; Klostermann 215.
19. **Pan.** 72,2, 1 (Holl III 256-7).
20. **Pan.** 72,3, 1 (Holl III 258).
21. **PL** 21, 335-86.
22. J. Ussher, **De Romanae ecclesiae symbolo apostolico vetere aliisque fidei formulis diatribe**, London 1647.
23. **The History of the Creeds**,², London (1938) 58-63; **JThS** 23, (1922) 362-89.
24. Epiphanius, **Pan.** 72, 2—3; 3, 4 (Holl III 257-8).
25. **Early Christian Creeds**,³, London (1972) 108-9.
26. Jerome, **De vir. illust.** 86.
27. On the Council of Rome G. Roethe, **Zur Geschichte der römischen Synoden in 3. und 4. Jahrhundert**, Berlin (1937) 81 ff. who distinguishes between the Roman and Oriental Synodal practice. See further Ch. Pietri, **Roma Christiana**, Rome (1976) 199-207 and W. Schneemelcher **ibid** (n. 6) 325.
28. The Eusebian letter is lost but can be reconstructed from Julius' letter, Athanasius. **Apol. c. Arianos** 21-35; cf. Sozomen **HE** 3, 8.
29. **Apol. c. Arianos** 26, 33.
30. **Eastern Encycl.** exordium (CSEL 65, 48).
31. A careful assessment is given by T. G. Jalland, **The Church and the Papacy**, London (1944) 214-18.
32. Jalland **ibid** (n. 31) 216.
33. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 22-5; Hilary, **De Synodis** 28-33; Socrates **HE** 2, 8-10; Sozomen **HE** 3, 5-6. Full discussion in W. Schneemelcher **ibid** (n. 6) which is fundamental for the understanding of the Council. I cannot however follow Schneemelcher in dating the Dedication Council to 6 January 341 but prefer the summer of 341, i.e. after the Council of Rome, and between 22 May and 31 August, i.e. in the fourteenth indiction and in the consulate of Marcellinus and Probinus (Athanasius, **De Synodis** 25).
34. **De Synodis** 22.
35. Kelly, **ibid** (n. 25) 266.
36. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 23; Hilary, **De Synodis** 29.
37. G. Bardy, **Recherches sur Saint Lucien d'Antioche**, Paris (1936) 85-132; Kelly, **ibid** (n. 25) 268; Schneemelcher, **ibid** (n. 6) 342 for a positive view.
38. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 25; Socrates, **HE** 2, 18.
39. **HE** 2, 18.
40. **HE** 3, 10.
41. **De Synodis** 25.
42. **Eastern Encyclical** (CSEL 65, 66-7).
43. **ZGA** 321-4.
44. **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 307.
45. **Ibid** (n. 25) 273.
46. T. E. Pollard **ibid** (n. 12) 189-90
47. Cf. H. Lietzmann **ibid** (n. 1) 195: 'The East fought the West under the banner of the ancient Church on behalf of the independence of the eastern synods, and at the same time it used the powers of the State to force the conclusions reached at Antioch on the completely independent Egyptian Church.'

1. **HE** 3, 3 (**GCS** 44, 179). The numbering of chapters is different in the **NPCF** translation (here **HE** 3, 1). Constantius II inherited a host of problems and the question of the succession and its solution left its mark on him. Yet he had a sense of duty in battle and inspired personal loyalty. Athanasius did not understand this.
2. G. H. Williams, 'Christology and Church-State Relations in the Fourth Century', **CH** 20, 3 (1951) 21 ff. has some interesting remarks on Themistius' influence on Constantius' political theology. Several of his panegyrics on the ideal Ruler were addressed to the Emperor and the latter erected a bronze statue in Constantinople in honour of the orator-philosopher.
3. **Rerum gest. lib.** 16, 10.
4. L. W. Barnard, 'Athanasius and the Roman State', **Lat.** 36 (1977) 433.
5. **Rerum gest. lib.** 21, 16.
6. Athanasius, **Apol. ad Constantium** 4.
7. **Hist. Arianorum** 15, 2.
8. **Eastern Encycl.** 14 (**CSEL** 65, 57-8).
9. Socrates **HE** 2, 20; Sozomen **HE** 3, 11; Theodoret **HE** 2, 3.
10. **Apol. ad Constantium** 4.
11. On the chronology V. C. de Clercq, **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 310.
12. **CSEL** 65, 66.
13. E. Honigmann, 'Recherches sur les listes des Pères de Nicée et de Constantinople', **Byz** 11 (1936) 429-49; 12 (1937) 323-47; 14 (1939) 17-76. In his reconstruction of the **grundskrift** of the Nicene lists Honigmann places Ossius at the head.
14. 2, 29 (ed Mendelssohn 86). Zosimus regarded Constantine as contributing significantly to the destruction of the Roman State by his political and military policies.
15. **CSEL** 65, 66.
16. **DL** (1935) col. 719. Discussed further by H. Chadwick, 'Ossius of Cordova and the Presidency of the Council of Antioch 325', **JThS** 9 (1958) 299-30 (to whom I owe this reference). Chadwick refers this incident to Ossius' presence at the Council of Antioch in 325. But would Ossius then have been referred to as 'living in the East'? The list of bishops signing the Eastern Encyclical at Serdica included a certain **Pison episcopus ab Adanis** (**CSEL** 65, 76); if Adanis is retained (with Feder) then by 343 the holder of this bishopric was an Eastern supporter. In 363 a bishop Pison of Adana is attested (Socrates **HE** 3, 25) However the MSS. of Hilary, preserving the Serdica lists, are defective and other interpretations read **Pison episcopus a Uanis** or **a Batnis** or **a Bagis**. E. Honigmann, **Patristic Studies**, **ST** 173, Rome (1953) 30 tentatively suggests **a Navis**, i.e. bishop of Nave or Neve in Arabia.
17. 'Ossius of Cordova and the Nicene Faith', **SP** 9, Berlin (1966) 316-20.
18. H. Chadwick, **Priscillian of Avila**, Oxford (1976) 4 who notes the article by P. G. van der Nat, 'Die Praefatio der Evangelienparaphrase des Iuvencus', **Romanitas et Christianas**, Leiden (1973) 249-57.
19. Ossius is the first known bishop of Cordova although it is likely that he had predecessors in this see. No heresy disturbed the Spanish Church until the rise of Priscillianism although relics of paganism continued to exist. Inscriptions reveal that worship of the Emperors continued to be practised during Constantine's and Constantius' reigns: **CIL** 2, 2203, 4; de Clercq **ibid** (n. 16) 31.
20. **Apol. ad Constantium** 4: 'in the fourth year of his exile' cannot be earlier than April 342 as Athanasius fled from Alexandria on 19 March 339, i.e. the day after xxii Phamenoth (**Index** XI 338/9).
21. **Cod. Theod.** 12, 1, 36.
22. **Eastern Encycl.** 14 (**CSEL** 65, 58); **Epist. Synod. Serd. Occ.** 1 (**CSEL** 65, 104); **Epist. Synod. Serd. ad Julium** 3 (**CSEL** 65, 128); Ossius, **Ep. ad Constantium** 2 (Athanasius, **Hist. Arian.** 44); Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 36; Socrates **HE** 2, 20; Sozomen **HE** 3, 11; Theodoret **HE** 2, 3. I owe these references to de Clercq **ibid** (n. 11) 312. On the right of the Emperors to convene Councils see the older study of F. X. Funk, 'Die Berufung der ökumenischen Synoden des Altertums', **Kirchenrechtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen** 1, Paderborn (1897).

23. On Constantine at Serdica, **Codex Justinianus**, ed. Krüger 498; O. Seeck, **Regesten der Kaiser und der Papste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.** (1919) 165-72. On Constantine at Serdica in 317 T. D. Barnes, 'The Emperor Constantine's Good Friday Sermon', **JThS** 27 (1976) 414-23; Petrus Patricius, **Excerpta Vaticana** 190 (quoted in Barnes *ibid* 422). The weak spot in Barnes' argument is however the emendation of the name Galerius for Maximian in the chapter heading of the speech. For Constantine's letter from Serdica to Valentinus, Governor of Numidia **Cod. Theod.** 16, 2, 7 (5 Feb 330); Optatus, **App.** 10. See further F. Millar, **The Emperor in the Roman World**, London (1977) 48, 590. A good description of Serdica is given by D. Mihailov, **Sofia, A Guide** (n.d.) 7-9.
24. **CSEL** 65, 64; cf. Ammianus Marcellinus, (n. 5) **Rerum. gest.** 21, 16, 18. The **cursus publicus** was first used by bishops at the Council of Arles (314); Optatus, **App.** 3; Eusebius **HE** 10,5. For Libanius' evidence see **Orat** 18, 143; Julian's reform **Cod. Theod.** 13, 5, 12.
25. L. W. Barnard, 'Apologetik', **Th Real** III, 2/3, Berlin (1977) 371-411, esp. 376-383.
26. C. L. Feltoe, **The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria**, Cambridge (1904); W. A. Bienert, **Dionysius von Alexandrien, Das erhaltene Werk ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ ΛΕΙΨΑΝΑ**, Stuttgart (1972).
27. Emphasised in the study of W. Schneemelcher, 'Serdika 342: Ein Beitrag zum Problem Ost und West in der Alten Kirche', **Ecclesia semper reformanda: theologische Aufsätze Ernst Wolf zum so Geburtstag**, München (1952) 83-104, especially 92. Schneemelcher gives full weight to the theological background of the period between Nicaea and Serdica.
28. On this H. von Campenhausen, **Fathers of the Greek Church**, London (1963) 69-83: 'Athanasius' writings were devoted almost entirely to controversy. There is an occasional note of mistrust in Hellenistic culture; at any rate, he completely ignores its treasures... It is hardly an accident that he was, as we know, the first theologian of any standing to preach in Coptic. There was something un-Greek about his nature, which is harsh and rigid, without a touch of intellectual grace or charm. His portrait, if we possessed one, would probably recall the ancient Pharaohs and their officials more than a Greek philosopher'. *Ibid* 73.
29. T. G. Jalland, **The Church and the Papacy**, London (1944) 216.

CHAPTER 4

1. **CSEL** 65, 58. On the influence of Serdica in Roman times A. H. M. Jones, **The cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces**,² Oxford (1971) 13, 21.
2. M. Stancheva in **Serdika I**, Sofia (1964) 159 ff; N. Chaneva, **Arh** 2 (1968) 13-26; R. F. Hoddinott, **Bulgaria in Antiquity**, London (1975) 269. See figure 3.
3. B. Filov, **Sofiyskata tsurkva Sveta Sofiya**, Sofia (1913); S. Boyadjiev in **Studia in honorem D. Dechev**, Sofia (1958) 611-630; S. Boyadjiev, **Sofiyskata tsurkva Sv. Sofiya**, Sofia (1967); R. F. Hoddinott *ibid* (n. 2) 269-77.
4. In April 1979. I am most grateful for the help of many scholars and in particular Professor V. Velkov, Mr. N. Stanev and Mrs. T. Lazova of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. I first discussed the civil building next of the Rotunda as a possible site with Mr. Stanev. An excellent summary of the various suggested Church locations is given by V. Pandoursky, **Dukhovna Kultura** 1.1. (1956) 27-33.
5. T. Ivanov and S. Bobchev in **Serdika I** *ibid* (n. 2) 17 ff; P. Karasimeonov, **GNM** 7 (1942) 185-231; R. F. Hoddinott *ibid* (n. 2) 174-5. The purpose of this building has been much discussed but no general consensus of opinion has emerged.
6. First suggested by R. F. Hoddinott *ibid* (n. 2) 174-5.
7. H. A. Drake, **In Praise of Constantine**, California (1976) 51-2 has some pertinent remarks on this in connexion with Eusebius' **Oratio de laudibus Constantini**.
8. B. Filov *ibid* (n. 3) 144-5.
9. **CSEL** 65, 61; Athanasius, **Hist. Arianorum** 44, 3; **CSEL** 65, 107.
10. **Hist. Arianorum** 15, 4.

11. Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 36
12. **Hist. Arianorum** 18.
13. G. W. H. Lampe, **Patristic Greek Lexicon**, Oxford (1961) 998.
14. R. F. Hoddinott **ibid** (n. 2) 175. A full report of the excavations has not yet been published.
15. At first they refused, Sozomen **HE** 3, 11; on Philagrius' intervention **Festal Index** 15 (342/3) extant only in Syriac and difficult to interpret.
16. **Apol. c. Arianos** 36-58; **Apol. ad Constantium** 4; **Hist. Arianorum** 15-26.
17. C. H. Turner, **Monumenta** 1, 2, 663-71.
18. Edited in Syriac by W. Cureton, **The Festal Letters of Athanasius**, London (1848); in Coptic by L. Th. Lefort, **CSCO** 150, Louvain (1955).
19. **Apol. ad. Constantium** 4: Τριῶν τοίκυν ἐτῶν παρελθόντων, τετάρτῳ ἐνιαυτῷ γράφει κελεύσας ἀπαντῆσαί με πρὸς αὐτὸν ἢ δὲ ἐν τῇ Μεδιολάνῳ. Athanasius left Alexandria on 19 March 339 (**Festal Index** 11).
20. Turner **ibid** (n. 17) 637; E. Schwartz, **ZGA** 326-7.
21. 'Le Comput Pascal par Octaéteris', **LM** 87 (1974) 319.
22. F. Loofs, 'Zur Synode von Sardica', **Theologische Studien und Kritiken** (1909) 294-5; J. Zeiller, **Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'empire romain**, Paris (1918) 228-31.
23. See n. 19.
24. **Apol. ad Constantium** 4.
25. **CSEL** 65, 58.
26. **Apol. ad Constantium** 4.
27. **Cod. Theod.** 9, 7, 3 (Milan); 12, 1, 36 (Trèves).
28. **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 317; The Council of Antioch (January 325) already knew of the forthcoming General Council eventually held at Nicaea in June 325.
- 28A E. Schwartz, 'Christliche und Jüdische Ostertafeln', **Abhand. der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wiss. zu Göttingen**, ph-hist kl. 8 (1905) 51; M. Richard **ibid** (n. 21) 320.
29. 'Paul of Constantinople', **HThR** 43 (1950) 31-92
30. **ibid** (n. 29) 90.
31. 'Una pagina di storia Bizantina del secolo IV, il Martirio dei Santi Notari', **AB** 64 (1946) 132-75.
32. **Ibid** (n. 29) 36-37; 90-92.
33. **CSEL** 65, 66-7.
34. **CSEL** 65, 61.
35. **CSEL** 65, 63.
36. H. Hess, **The Canons of the Council of Serdica**, Oxford (1958) 15 for a good summary.
37. **CSEL** 65, 56 See p.16.
38. **Ibid** (n. 21) 320-322.
39. **Hist. Arianorum** 21.
40. V. C. de Clercq **ibid** (n. 28) 317.
41. E. Schwartz, 'Zur Kirchengeschichte des vierten Jahrhunderts' **ZNW** 34 (1935) 139; H. Lietzmann, **From Constantine to Julian**, London (1967) 207.
42. **Ibid** (n. 29) 92.
43. **Ibid** (n. 21) 322.
44. **HE** 2, 8 (**GCS** 44, 118) M. Richard **ibid** (n. 21) 321 follows Theodoret. It is significant however that Richard states: 'L'étude des chapitres XIV à XVIII du prologue des lettres festales de saint Athanase ne permet donc pas de prouver que le concile de Sardique a eu lieu en 343, même si les données chronologiques de ces chapitres peuvent s'accorder avec cette hypothèse, ce que nous concédons volontiers'. (**ibid** (n. 21) 326).

CHAPTER 5

1. **CSEL** 65, 127.
2. Athan. **Apol. c. Arianos** 36; A. Feder, 'Studien zu Hilarius von Poitiers', **Sitz. der Kaiser. Akad. der Wiss. in Wien**, ph-hist kl. 166 (1910) 5; 64-70, 124-6; V. C. De Clercq, **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 329

3. HE 2, 8.
4. **Hist. Arianorum** 28; the Eastern Encyclical however confirms that he had some support in Italy: **denique eum sibi haec in cassum provenisse cognosceret, ad Iulium Roman perrexit, sed et ad Italiae quosdam ipsius partis episcopos** (CSEL 65, 56)
5. CSEL 65, 48.
6. CSEL 65, 138.
7. Suggested by J. Stevenson, **The Catacombs**, London (1978) 145.
8. M. Brion, **Pompeii and Herculaneum**, London (1976) 14. At the time of the Council of Nicaea Christianity had three central settlements in Italy — Rome, Puteoli-Naples and Ariminum (Rimini). A. von Harnack, **Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries** 2, London (1908) 257. Constantine himself endowed churches in Naples.
9. CSEL 65, 126-7.
10. **Ibid.** (n. 2) 331.
11. Hilary (CSEL 65, 132-9); Athan. **Apol. c. Arianos** 50; the letters of the Council and of Athanasius to Mareotis (C. H. Turner, **Monumenta** 1, 658, 660-2).
12. Ballerini, **PL** 56, 54-64; Feder **ibid** (n. 2) 18-62. I. Rămureanu, **S. Teol.** 14 (1962) 158 rather surprisingly states that eighty bishops attended the Orthodox assembly.
13. **Hist. Arianorum** 15.
14. Socrates **HE** 2, 20; Sozomen **HE** 3, 12.
15. **A History of the Early Church — Vol. 3 From Constantine to Julian**, London (1967) 200.
16. Athan. **Hist. Arianorum** 18. Other sources are confused; Hilary (CSEL 65, 121) refers to Arius of Palestine and Stephen of Arabia; elsewhere Athanasius calls them Macarius of Palestine and Asterius of Arabia (**Apol. c. Arianos** 48).
17. In the fourth and fifth centuries the use of Latin was increasing in Egypt and it is possible that some of the Egyptian bishops present at Serdica were bilingual. On Latin in Egypt see N. A. Dahl, **Text and Interpretation**, Cambridge (1979) 80 and G. Bardy, **La question des langues dans l'Église ancienne**, Paris (1948) 143-6.
18. Chapter 10
19. L. Wallach, **Diplomatic Studies in Latin and Greek Documents from the Carolingian Age**, Ithaca and London (1977) 3-5.
20. The recording of conciliar discussions and the proceedings of commissions of enquiry became widespread in the fourth century and perhaps earlier; cf. the record of the baptismal Council held at Carthage in 256 (CSEL 3, 435-61); the written record of the trial of Beryllus at Bostra c. 244 (Eusebius **HE** 6, 33); the trial of Silvanus of Cirta by Zenophilus, governor of Numidia in 320 (M. J. Routh, **Reliquiae Sacrae** 4 (1846) 320-35); the record of the dialogue between Pope Liberius and Constantius at Milan in 355 (Theodoret **HE** 2, 16); the **Acta** of the Council of Aquileia of 381 (J. Hardouin, **Acta Conciliorum et Epistolae, Decretales, ac Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum** Paris (1714-15) 1, 825-34). We would have expected a stenographic record of the **Acta** of the Orthodox Council of Serdica to have been made — but none has survived.
21. **Apol. c. Arianos** 43.
22. **Apol. c. Arianos** 45.
23. **Apol. c. Arianos** 45.
24. Athan. **Hist. Arianorum** 15, 42; Ossius writes as President (**Hist. Arianorum** 44); Theodoret **HE** 2, 15.
25. CSEL 65, 60, 67.
26. CSEL 65, 108.
27. Socrates **HE** 2, 20 places the Eastern Council in Philippopolis but this is contradicted by the Easterns themselves: **placuit nobis de Serdica scribere et ea quae gesta sunt nuntiare nostramque sententiam declarare** (CSEL 65, 63). I hold that the Eastern Council was held in the imperial residence in Serdica; **Index** 15 to the Festal letters merely states that the Arians returned to Philippopolis but does not state that they held a Council there. Hilary confirms that the Encyclical letter of the Easterns, and the Creed to which they subscribed, was drawn up at Serdica (c. **Constantium** 23, 25; **De Synodis** 34; **Frag. hist.** B, 4, 1 and 2 (CSEL 65, 48, 78).
28. Sozomen **HE** 3, 12; Socrates **HE** 2, 20 (based on Sabinus). The names are listed in Appendix A.

29. CSEL 65, 74-8.
30. CSEL 65, 58.
31. Among the signatories of the Eastern Encyclical is a certain **Squirius episcopus a Mareota** — presumably Ischyra; Feder, **Studien** II 79-81.
32. **Apol. c. Arianos** 49; Gratus referred to a **statutum** of the Western Serdica Council, forbidding a bishop to ordain a man from another diocese, in the fifth Canon of the Council of Carthage. C. Munier, **Concilia Africae AD 345-525**, CC 149 Turnholti (1974) 6.
33. **Ep.** 44, 3 and **c. Cresconium** 3, 34 and 4, 44. J. Zeiller holds that the list of bishops in the exordium to the Eastern Encyclical has been tampered with by the Donatists; 'Donatisme et Arianisme. La falsification donatiste des documents du concile arien de Sardique', **Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres** (1933) 65-73. According to Jerome, **de Vir. Illustr.** 93 there were doctrinal similarities between Donatus and the Arian position (**de Spiritu sancto Ariano dogmati congruens**).
34. V. Pirvan, **Contributii epigrafice la istoria crestinismului daco-roman**, Bucuresti (1911) 158-194; R. Vulpe, **Histoire ancienne de la Dobrogea**, Bucarest (1938) 351 et al.
35. **Passio Sancti Iraenei**; Knopf-Krüger, **Ausgewählte Martyrerakten**, Tübingen (1929) 103-5.
36. 'Sinodul de la Sardica din anul-343 importanta lui pentru Istoria Pătrunderii Creştinismului la Geto-Daco-Romani', **S. Teol.** 14 (1962) 146-182, especially 179-80.

CHAPTER 6

1. CSEL 65, 128-9; cf. CSEL 65, 104.
2. Chapter 9.
3. CSEL 65, 58, 59, 61, 63.
4. CSEL 65, 64: **Ortus occasusque mundi propter unum vel duos paucosque sceleratos impie sentientes et turpiter viventes funditus vertitur et dura saevaque tempestate turbatur, in quibus nulla religionis semina resederunt.**
5. A. H. M. Jones, **The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces**² Oxford (1971) 22
6. R. F. Hoddinott, **Bulgaria in Antiquity**, London (1975) 187.
7. I am grateful to Mr. M. Matheev, architect of Plovdiv, who showed me (in April 1979) his reconstructed plan of the city and discussed possible sites for the meetings of the Eastern bishops (see fig. 5). See also C. Djambov and M. Matheev, 'Observation archéologique sur l'ensemble du forum de Philippopolis', **Pulpudeva** 1. Sofia (1976) 135-152.
8. Seen by the present writer in April 1979. The inscription is however slightly later than the date of the Council of Serdica.
9. **Apol. c. Arianos** 37 & 41. Athanasius however does not state that the Eastern bishops were then in Philippopolis.
10. **HE** 3, 11.
11. Schwartz translated the passage into Greek: ἐν τούτῳ ἐγένετο ἡ σύνοδος ἡ ἐν Σερδικῇ καὶ καταλαβόντες οἱ Ἀρειανοὶ εἰς φιλιπποπόλιν ἀπέστρεψαν. ὁ γὰρ Φιλάγγριος αὐτοῖς τοῦτο συνεβούλευσεν. There would be little point in Philagrius' giving the Easterns advice on their **return** to Philippopolis and the reference is more likely to be to Philagrius' advice at Philippopolis **before** they went to Serdica.
12. **Apol. c. Arianos** 48; cf. CSEL 65, 120-21.
13. CSEL 65, 58.
14. CSEL 65, 60.
15. **Hist. Arianorum** 15, 3.
16. **Apol. c. Arianos** 45 (CSEL 65, 109-11).
17. **Hist. Arianorum** 15.
18. Athan. **Apol. c. Arianos** 36; **Hist. Arianorum** 16, 36; Ossius **Ep. ad Constantium** (**Hist. Arianorum** 44).
19. CSEL 65, 60

20. For a reconstruction of events V. C. De Clercq, **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 344. However his treatment is strongly biased towards the Western position and he accepts too uncritically Athanasius' judgements. Emperor had issued a decree exempting clergy from tax payments and from receiving quartered persons (**Cod. Theod.** 16, 2, 8).
21. **Epist. ad Constantium** 2 (**Hist. Arianorum** 44).
22. **Ibid** (n. 20) 346.
23. **Hist. Arianorum** 16. According to Athanasius the Easterns fled because Constantius had written giving them news of his victory over the Persians. Is it possible that, in fact, Constantius ordered them to withdraw? Just before the Council (27 August 343) the Emperor had issued a decree exempting clergy from tax payments and from receiving quartered persons (**Cod. Theod.** 16, 2, 8).
24. **Hist. Arianorum** 16.
25. **CSEL** 65, 140; cf. Athanasius, **Hist Arianorum** 16.
26. **HE** 3, 11.
27. Chapter 9
28. B. J. Kidd, **A History of the Church to AD 461**, Vol. 2 Oxford (1922) 86, refers to the Arian **Conciliabulum** at Philippopolis.
29. **C. Constantium** 23 and 25; **De Synodis** 34; **CSEL** 65, 48.
30. **CSEL** 65, 63: **Placuit nobis de Serdica scribere et ea quae gesta sunt nuntiare nostramque sententiam declarare.**
31. Athan. **Hist. Arianorum** 18.

CHAPTER 7

1. **HE** 3, 13.
2. **HE** 2, 22.
3. **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 354.
4. **Apol. c. Arianos** 44
5. **CSEL** 65, 53-54.
6. **CSEL** 65, 53. On the development of the Ischyrras legend A. Robertson **NPCF** 4 xxxviii has some succinct comments.
7. **Apol. c. Arianos** 37, 41, 46.
8. **CSEL** 65, 115.
9. **CSEL** 65, 116.
10. **Apol. c. Arianos** 64.
11. H. I. Bell, **Jews and Christians in Egypt**, London (1924) and W. E. Crum, 'Some further Meletian documents', **JEA** 13 (1927) 19-26. In papyrus No. 1914 Callistus, a Meletian monk, gives a circumstantial account of the sufferings of the Meletians at the hands of Athanasius and his followers.
12. Socrates **HE** 1, 29.
13. Sozomen **HE** 2, 25.
14. **Apol. c. Arianos** 68.
15. **CSEL** 65, 54-5.
16. **Apol. c. Arianos** 40.
17. **Hist. Arianorum** 17.
18. Chapter 2
19. Chapter 9
20. **Apol. c. Arianos** 40; cf. **CSEL** 65, 117-8.
21. **Fr.** 2, 21-3.
22. For the statement of faith **Pan.** 72, 3, 1 (**Holl III**, 258); cf. Athanasius, **Hist. Arianorum** 6.

23. Fr. 2, 23. The publication of Marcellus' controversial work against the Arian Asterius c. 334 was the original cause of his deposition. This book has not been preserved.
24. Fr. 4-7, 42, 48, 91, 109 in Klostermann-Hansen, **Eusebius-Werke IV** Berlin (1972).
25. CSEL 65, 49-50, my translation.
26. ZKG 75 (1964) 117-70; 79 (1968) 3-42; 83 (1972) 145-94; ZNW 64 (1973) 75-121.
27. CSEL 65, 58.
28. Chapter 9
29. CSEL 65, 55, 61.
30. Apol. c. Arianos 45.
31. Apol. c. Arianos 47.
32. HE 3, 12.
33. HE 3, 12.
34. CSEL 65, 56.
35. Hist. Arianorum 18, 19.
36. A. Grillmeier, **Christ in Christian Tradition**² London and Oxford (1975) 296-301.
37. CSEL 65, 66.
38. See Chapter 1 n. 41. The date of Eustathius' fall is disputed. I follow W. Schneemelcher in holding that there were two Councils held at Antioch to deal with the Eustathius issue, the earliest in 326.
39. HE 2, 20.
40. Ch. 4
41. Apol. c. Arianos 47.
42. Apol. c. Arianos 47. Athanasius, **Ep. ad Episcopos Aegypti** 7 states that Patrophilus of Scythopolis was also deposed with the Eastern leaders but his name is not included in any of the Encyclical letters and we must presume that this is a lapse of memory on Athanasius' part, writing in c. 356.

CHAPTER 8

1. Chapter 5, n. 19, 20.
2. Chapter 5
3. He had carried out missions to Alexandria for the Emperor and presided at the Council of Antioch early in 325.
4. I. Gelzer, 'Das Rundschreiben der Synode von Sardika', ZNW 40 (1941) 1-24.
5. Chapter 7.
6. **A History of the Councils of the Church** Vol. 2 Edinburgh (1876) 165-6.
7. Hefele *ibid* (n. 6) 166.
8. Hist. Arianorum 20; cf. Sozomen HE 3, 11, 20; Socrates HE 2, 22; Theodoret HE 2, 6. On the letter to Constantius II see the remarks of R. Klein, **Constantius II. und die Christliche Kirche**, Darmstadt (1977) 50-1. While containing acute insights Klein's work is too heavily weighted in favour of the Eastern position to carry conviction. Athanasius only appears as prosecutor. For Cyril of Jerusalem's view of Constantius' piety, PG 33, 1168, 1173.
9. HE 2, 6.
10. I owe these observations to Dr John Herbert.
11. I give an English translation in Appendix A.
12. Socrates HE 2, 20 states that the Easterns at Philippopolis rejected the ὁμοούσιος and embodied the ἀνόμοτος in their letters which they then despatched widely. There is no other indication of this and Socrates is an unreliable witness concerning the events surrounding Serdica. Sozomen is a much more reliable historian. Similarly it should not be assumed that Augustine knew nothing of the Orthodox Council but only of the Eastern Council in the light of his statement: **Sardicense Concilium Arianorum fuit** (c. Crescon 3, 34; 4, 44; Ep. 44, 3; ad Eleusium 3). He clearly states that he had only read the Eastern Encyclical with haste and noted that the Eastern Council had rejected Julius and Athanasius. He intended, he states, to study the document when he had leisure from which he would have discovered the existence of the Western

- assembly. There is no evidence that the Easterns wished to substitute themselves for the Western Council. They believed that they were a true Council in their own right.
13. **CSEL** 65, 49 (cf. 54, 59, 63) which is a classic statement of the source of Christian authority; cf. Irenaeus **adv. Haer.** 3, 3, 1; Clem. Alex. **Strom.** 7, 16; Origen, **De Princ.** Proem 1; Cyril Jer. **Cat.** 4, 33; Aug. **Ep. Manich.** 6; Vinc. Lerins, **Commonitorium** 2, 5 **quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est**. The theological questions of the belief and unity of the Church lay below the jurisdictional and legal issues to the fore in this and the Western Encyclicals.
 14. Chapter 9.
 15. **CSEL** 65, 51.
 16. C. H. Roberts, **Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt**, Oxford (1979) 8.
 17. The Encyclical has Scyras (**CSEL** 65, 53) on which see A. Feder, **Studien** II 79 ff. Sozomen **HE** 2, 28 has Ischyron. See. p.
 18. **CSEL** 65, 76.
 19. See Chapter 11
 20. **CSEL** 65, 63-4.
 21. Sozomen **HE** 3, 20; Socrates **HE** 2, 22.
 22. Socrates **HE** 2, 23.

CHAPTER 9

1. **CSEL** 65, 128.
2. **CSEL** 65, 124.
3. Turner, **Monumenta** 1, 2, 644.
4. **HE** 3, 12 (NPCF translation); Socrates **HE** 2, 20 is less accurate.
5. **P. G.** 26, 796-808.
6. NPCF translation (with minor changes).
7. **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 367.
8. F. Loofs, 'Zur Synode von Sardica', **Theologische Studien und Kritiken** (1909) 291; J. N. D. Kelly, **Early Christian Creeds**³ London (1972) 279. As late as 357 Athanasius could however refer to 'the great Council of Serdica' (**Apol. de fuga** 26) in regard to its deposition of George. He wanted its support in matters of ecclesiastical jurisdiction but not in doctrinal matters.
9. An excellent account of the history of the Nicene Creed after 325 is given by J. N. D. Kelly **ibid** (n. 8) 254-62. Even the Creed of Cyril of Jerusalem c. 348 shows no knowledge of the **Nicaeanum**.
10. **Ibid.** (n. 8) 260-1.
11. The view of E. Schwartz, 'Der Griechische Text der Kanones von Serdika', **ZNW** 30 (1931) 1-35.
12. Cassiodorus is dependent on Theodoret who used the archives of the Church at Antioch in writing his **HE. The Collectio Theodosii Diaconi** is based on an earlier copy contained in the Alexandrian Chronicle c. 370. See further De Clercq **ibid** (n. 7) 372.
13. F. Loofs, 'Das Glaubensbekenntnis der Homousianer von Sardica', **Abhandlungen der Königlich preussischen Akademie der Wiss. ph. hist. Kl.** (1909) 1. 1-39.
14. A convenient English translation of Theodoret's version will be found in NPCF 3, 71-2.
15. A. von Harnack, **Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte** ed. 5, 2, 246 n. 1.
16. F. Loofs, **ibid** (n. 13) 11, 37.
17. Kelly **ibid** (n. 8) 277.
18. **CSEL** 65, 108.
19. **De Synodis** 25.
20. **HE** 2, 18.
21. Translation by J. N. D. Kelly **ibid** (n. 8) 272; text in Athanasius, **De Synodis** 25 and Socrates **HE** 2, 18.
22. Discussed by G. Bardy, **Recherches sur saint Lucien d'Antioche** Paris (1936) 85-132. W. Schneemelcher, 'Die Kirchweihsynode von Antiochen 341', **Bonner Festgabe Johannes**

- Straub**, Bonn (1977) 342 thinks that a theological declaration of Lucian was employed at Antioch. For connexions with Asterius see A. Grillmeier, **Christ in Christian Tradition**² London (1975) 209.
23. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 23; Hilary, **De Synodis** 29.
 24. Hilary, **Collectanae Antiariana Parisina, Series A. IV 2** (CSEL 65, 72-3) A Greek version of these anathemas is given by Athanasius, **De Synodis** 26.
 25. **Fr.** 34 (Klostermann 4, 190); Kelly **ibid** (n. 8) 276.
 26. It is possible that many of the Eastern bishops who had been at the Dedication Council in 341 would have come to Serdica. While no list of the ninety-seven bishops at Antioch has survived Sozomen **HE** 3, 5 gives several names of Eastern leaders present at Antioch which are also found in the Serdica lists, e.g. Acacius, Theodore, Eudoxius and Dianius (CSEL 65, 74-8). Dianius (reading Διανίω for Δανία bishop of Cappadocean Caesarea, headed the list of the Eastern bishops addressed by Julius in his celebrated letter to the Antiochenes; Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 20.
 27. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 26; Socrates **HE** 2, 19.
 28. J. N. D. Kelly **ibid** (n. 8) 279.
 29. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 27; Socrates **HE** 2, 30; Hilary, **De Synodis** 38.
 30. Letter to the Alexandrian Church; Socrates **HE** 1, 9; Theodoret **HE** 1, 9; Opitz **Ürk.** 23.
 31. C. J. Hefele, **A History of the Christian Councils** 1, Edinburgh (1872) 326 who points out that the differences between the two computations were well-known but that the Council passed over these without much discussion.
 32. Reconstructed from the Syriac by E. Schwartz and quoted by M. Richard, 'Le Comput Pascal par Octaétéris', **LM** 87 (1974) 324.
 33. Chapter 4.
 34. **NPCF** 4, 544.
 35. C. J. Hefele, **A History of the Councils of the Church**,² Edinburgh (1876) 159.
 36. M. Richard **ibid** (n. 32) 334-9; E. Schwartz, **ZGA** 1-29.
 37. C. H. Turner, **Monumenta** 1. 641-3; E. Schwartz, 'Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln', **Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wiss. zu Göttingen ph-hist. Kl.** 8 (1905) No. 6 121-5.
 38. Stephen, bishop of Antioch, was the first to sign the Eastern Encyclical. Jewish influence remained strong in Antioch in the fourth century AD and the older Easter observance was observed there.
 39. Schwartz **ibid** (n. 37) 123.
 40. Turner **ibid** (n. 37) 641.
 41. **ibid** (n. 37) 125.

CHAPTER 10

1. **CSEL** 65, 128-9.
2. P. Batiffol, **La Paix constantinienne et le catholicisme**, Paris (1929) 434; V. C. De Clercq, **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 390.
3. 'Die Unechtheit der Canones von Sardica', **Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philos. phil. Kl.** München (1901) 417-76; (1902) 383-426; (1903) 321-44; 'Zur Kritik meiner Abhandlung: Die Unechtheit der Canones von Sardica', **Revue internationale de théologie** II (1902) 427-54. On the Canons see further K. M. Girardet, 'Appellatio. Ein Kapitel Kirchlicher Rechtsgeschichte in der Kanones der vierten Jahrhunderts', **Hist.** 23 (1974) 109-11 and 116-122.
4. **CSEL** 35, 58; **Ep.** 13 in **Collectio Avellana**; H. Hess, **The Canons of the Council of Serdica**, Oxford (1958) 23 to whom I am indebted in this chapter.
5. Friedrich **ibid** (n. 3) (1901) 424-32; 452-472.
6. Turner **Monumenta** 1. 601 ff.
7. 'L'Authenticité des canons de Sardique', **Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions** 2, Oxford (1908) 345-52.
8. The sections dealing with the Council of Serdica and related documents are in **Tom.** 1, 2, 3-4, 441-671. Turner's great work was reviewed by E. Schwartz, **ZSSR** 20 (1931) 590-607.

9. Canon 5; C. Munier, **Concilia Africae AD 345—525**, CC 149 Turnholti (1974) 6; Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 441 wrongly dates this Council to 348; cf. E. Schwartz, **id** (n. 16) 4
10. **Ep.** 63, 64; 69, 5.
11. Turner lists thirteen MSS which join the Nicene and Serdica Canons; **ibid** (n. 6) 444.
12. 'Chapters in the History of the Latin MSS of Canons', **JThS** 31 (1930) 9-20.
13. Schwartz **ibid** (n. 8) 602-3
14. **Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'empire romain**. Paris (1918) 247-55
15. Discussed by H. Hess, **ibid** (n. 4) 42 and De Clercq **ibid** (n. 2) 381.
16. E. Schwartz, 'Der griechische Text der Kanones von Serdika', **ZNW** 30 (1931) 7 ff.
17. Canon VIII; 11 (Greek); Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 518.
18. Canon 6b, 7b; Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 512.
19. Canon XIII; 16 (Greek); Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 526-8. On the autonomy of the Greek text J. Zeiller **ibid** (n. 14) 252; De Clercq **ibid** (n. 2) 383; E. Schwartz **ibid** (n. 16) 31 held that these Canons were a forgery.
20. **Ibid** (n. 4) 43-4.
21. Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 498-500.
22. Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 524; De Clercq **ibid** (n. 2) 384.
23. **Ibid** (n. 2) 384.
24. **CSEL** 3, 435-61.
25. M. J. Routh, **Reliquiae Sacrae** 4, Oxford (1846) 320-35.
26. Augustine, c. **Cresconium** 3, 27 (**CSEL** 52, 435-7).
27. Theodoret **HE** 2, 16.
28. J. Hardouin, **Acta Conciliorum et Epistolae, Decretales ac Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum**, Paris (1714-15) 1. 1049-90.
29. **HE** 2, 39.
30. **HE** 4, 6.
31. **Dial. adv. Luciferianos** 18 (**PL** 23, 172).
32. Hess (**ibid** (n. 4) 47-8) has some interesting remarks on this.
33. 'Die Unechtheit der Canones von Sardica' **ibid** (n. 3) 465-6.
34. **Ibid** (n. 2) 385-6.
35. C. H. Turner, 'The Genuineness of the Sardican Canons', **JThS** 3 (1902) 373; H. Hess **ibid** (n. 4) 26.
36. Chapter 5.
37. **HE** 4, 24.
38. Discussed by P. Batiffol, 'Sozomène et Sabinos', **BZ** 7 (1895) 265-84, cf. 266; G. Schoo, **Die Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sozomenos**, Berlin (1911) 95-109; See chapter 12
39. Chapter 4
40. A good example is the disciplinary Canons V, VI and VII (7, 8, 9, 21 Greek).
41. P. Batiffol, 'Le Règlement des premiers conciles africains', **Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétiennes** 3 (1913) 3-19; A. Steinwenter, 'De antike kirchliche Rechtsgang und seine Quellen', **ZSSR** 54 (1934) 1-116, cf. 48-9; H. Gelzer, 'Die Konzilien als Reichsparlamente', **Ausgewählte kleine Schriften**, Leipzig (1907) 142-56; Hess **ibid** (n. 4) 29-30.
42. F. Millar, **The Emperor in the Roman World**, London (1977) 341-55 has some valuable remarks on the **Senatus consulta**. Until the early-third century they were valid for the whole Empire but earlier **consulta** continued to be valid after then. Millar however points out that the law making role of the Senate was gradually overshadowed by that of the Emperor, although there remained the consciousness of continuity with the Senate of the Republic down to the fourth century AD. The Church seems to have taken over the earlier Senate process.
43. **CSEL** 3, 435-61; **ACO** 1, 2, 39-40; **ACO** 2, 3, 442-3. For the Minutes of the Senate session of 438 see C. Pharr (ed.), **The Theodosian Code**, Princeton (1952) 3-7.
44. **Ibid** (n. 4) 31 ff. This section of his book covers new ground and, to my mind, demonstrates conclusively the influence of Senate procedure on the Serdica process.
45. Similar to the British Parliamentary process in which Members of Parliament file into the respective lobbies in order to vote.
46. T. Mommsen, **Le Droit public romain** 7, Paris (1891) 141 ff.
47. **Ibid** (n. 4) 33.

48. Found in J. Hardouin, **ibid** (n. 5) and J. B. Pitra, **Juris Ecclesiastici Graecorum Historia et Monumenta** 1, Rome (1864).
49. **Ibid** (n. 4) 36.
50. **Ibid** (n. 4) 37.
51. The origin of Canons 28-30 of Chalcedon is different from the process envisaged in the **placuit** redaction.
52. E. Schwartz, 'Die Kanonensammlung der alten Reichskirche', **ZSSR** 56 (1936) 1-114, cf. 35-43.
53. **Geschichte des Papsttums** 1, Tübingen (1930) 160.
54. **Ibid** (n. 4) 41.
55. **Ibid** (n. 6) 452486.
56. **Ibid** (n. 4) 25, 137.
57. **PL** 20, 473.
58. **PL** 20, 475.
59. Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 416 quoted in Hess **ibid** (n. 4) 51.
60. **CSEL** 65, 127: **Quoniam ergo universa, quae gesta sunt, quae acta, quae constituta, et chartae continent et vivae voces carissimorum fratrum et compresbyterorum nostrorum Arcydamii et Filoxeni et carissimi filii nostri Leonis supervacuum videtur eadem his inferre litteris. Charta** originally meant a leaf of Egyptian papyrus material; a poem, letter or account written upon paper; an account of public proceedings; Lewis and Short, **A Latin Dictionary**, Oxford (1966) 325. The document containing the Canons is the only one which would fit **chartae**.
61. Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 644.
62. J. N. D. Kelly, **Early Christian Creeds**,³ London (1972) 255-262.
63. **Ep. 5 (PL 20, 496 A)**; Hess **ibid** (n. 4) 54.
64. Critical edition by V. N. Benesevic, **Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil. hist. Kl.** (1937) Heft 14.
65. Ed. by V. N. Benesevic, St. Petersburg (1906).
66. **Ibid** (n. 4) 56.
67. **Ibid** (n. 16) 19.
68. Edition in Turner **ibid** (n. 6) 491-531. For a discussion of this Codex see W. Telfer, 'The Codex Verona LX (58)', **HThR** 36 (1943) 169-246.
69. C. H. Turner, 'The Verona Manuscripts of Canons LX (58) and LIX (57)', **The Guardian**, December 11 (1895) 1921-2.
70. E. Schwartz, 'Über die Sammlung des Cod. Veronensis LX', **ZNW** 35 (1936) 1-23.
71. **Tomus ad Antioch** 5.

CHAPTER 11

1. **Cod. Theod.** 16, 2, 6.
2. W. H. C. Frend, **The Early Church**, London (1965) 247.
3. Canon 5; I have adopted here Hess' enumeration of the Canons which differs from Turner's.
4. Canons 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.
5. Canon 15.
6. Canon 14.
7. Canon 13.
8. Pontius, **Vita S. Cypriani** 3; **PL** 3, 1484.
9. Silvanus of Cirta was a sub-deacon, **Gesta apud Zenophilum** 10; Fabian a layman, Eusebius **HE** 6, 29; H. Hess, **The Canons of the Council of Serdica**, Oxford (1958) 104.
10. Canons 1 and 2, cf. Canons 15 and 16 (Nicaea), Canon 21 (Antioch). For the indignation of the Orthodox against Valens see the Epistle of the Western Council to Julius: **Quid autem de impiis et de imperitis adolescentibus Ursacio et Valente statutum sit, accipe, beatissime frater, quia manifestum erat eos non cessare adulterinae doctrinae letalia semina spargere et quod Valens relictā ecclesia ecclesiam aliam invadere voluisset. eo tempore, quo seditionem commovit, unus ex fratribus nostris, qui fugere non potuit,**

Viator obrutus et conculcatus in eadem Aquiliensium civitate tertia die defecit, utique mortis fuit Valens, qui perturbavit, qui sollicitavit. (CSEL 65, 129).

11. Canon 14 (Neo-caesarea); 8 (Nicaea); 13 (Ancyra); 10 (Antioch).
12. **Studies in Early Church History**, Oxford (1912) 63-6.
13. **Das Institut der Chorbischöfe im Orient**, Munich (1903) 40-41; Hess *ibid* (n. 9) 101.
14. Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 85
15. Hess *ibid* (n. 9) 102. On Chorespiscopi see further E. Kirsten, **RAC** 2 (1954) 1105-14; J. Parisot, 'Les Chorévêques', **ROC** 6 (1901) 157-60.
16. Canons 8 & 16.
17. Canon 17.
18. Canon 20 (Greek).
19. Appeal Canons in **Monumenta I** 455-458; 460-462. See chapter 10
20. C. J. Hefele, **A History of the Councils of the Church** 2, Edinburgh (1876) 115 n. 1; H. Hess *ibid* (n. 9) 119-20.
21. 'Die griechische Text der Kanones von Serdica', **ZNW** 30 (1931) 27.
22. Hess *ibid* (n. 9) 120.
23. **CSEL** 65, 127.
24. **Geschichte des Papsttums** 1, Tübingen (1930) 587.
25. For **referre** as 'report', Lewis and Short, **A Latin Dictionary**, Oxford (1966) 1544-5. T. G. Jalland, **The Church and the Papacy**, London (1944) 223 seems to me to over-emphasise the influence of provincial and regional Councils in the West at the time of Serdica.
26. E. Caspar, 'Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte: IV. Zur Interpretation der Kanones III-V von Sardica', **ZKG** 47 (1928) 162-177.
27. *Ibid* (n. 9) 121-9.
28. *Ibid* (n. 26) 164 ff.
29. Hess *ibid* (n. 9) 124-5.
30. 'Appellatio. Ein Kapitel Kirchlicher Rechtsgeschichte in den Kanones des vierten Jahrhunderts', **Hist** 23 (1974) 98-127, especially 109-111, 116-122. Cf. also E. Stein, **Untersuchungen über das Offizium der Prätorianerpräfektur seit Diokletian**² (ed. J-R. Palanque), Amsterdam (1962) 40 ff. Ioan N. Floca, 'Canoanele Sinodului de la Sardica', **S. Teol.** 23 (1971) 720-726 is unaware of Western study of the Canons, apart from the older study of Hefele.
31. *Ibid* (n. 9) 112.
32. In Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 22.
33. In Athanasius, **Apol. c. Arianos** 22; cf. Socrates **HE** 2, 11 and Athanasius' statement that the Eusebians requested a Council in order to frighten him (**Apol. c. Arianos** 20).
34. H. Chadwick, **The Early Church**, London (1967) 239. The translation of the relics of S. Andrew to Constantinople apparently took place during the reign of Constantius II (Philostorgius **HE** 3, 2). The American scholar G. Downey holds that it was Constantius, rather than Constantine, who thought of himself as a 'thirteenth apostle', **DOP** 6 (1951) 51-80.
35. L. W. Barnard, **Studies in Church History and Patristics**, Thessaloniki (1978) 342-5.
36. *Ibid* (n. 25) 213.
37. **Ossius of Cordova**, Washington (1954) 396.
38. **Collectio Avellana** 13.
39. Jalland *ibid* (n. 25) 247.
40. For a good summary of the development of papal claims H. Chadwick, *ibid* (n.34) 237-46.

CHAPTER 12

1. **HE** 2, 8.
2. **The First Christian Histories**, Paris (1977) 173.
3. **HE** 1, 10, 13; 2, 38; 4, 9; 5, 10; 6, 22; Chestnut *ibid* (n. 2) 176. On Socrates, A. Harnack and A. C. McGiffert, **Encyclopaedia Britannica** (11 ed.); Works in **PG** 67; **Church History** ed. W. Bright, Oxford (1878).

4. HE 2, 15.
5. HE 2, 16.
6. CSEL 65, 67: *propter quem homicidia multa facta sunt*.
7. HE 2, 17.
8. HE 2, 18.
9. HE 2, 20.
10. HE 2, 20.
11. HE 2, 20 quoting *Apologia c. Arianos* 1; 50.
12. Chapter 5.
13. HE 2, 20. This however is hardly the essence of the Sabellian heresy. Socrates appears to have had doubts about Marcellus.
14. HE 2, 22.
15. HE 2, 23.
16. CSEL 65, 57.
17. CSEL 65, 66.
18. HE 2, 17; Socrates accuses Sabinus of the Macedonian heresy, of omitting the letters of Julius while giving the letters of the Eusebians to Julius, and of reproducing only letters which ignore or repudiate the *homoousios*.
19. W. Telfer, 'Paul of Constantinople', *HThR* 43 (1950) 42-4.
20. *Ibid* (n. 19) 44.
21. HE 2, 20.
22. Introduction to HE 5.
23. HE 25-6.
24. First noted by G. F. Chesnut, *ibid* (n. 2) 188-9 to whom I am indebted.
25. On Sozomen A. Harnack and A. C. McGiffert, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.); Works ed. J. Bidez and G. C. Hansen, GCS 50, Berlin (1960); see also G. Schoo, *Die Quellen des Kirchenhistorikers Sozomenos*, Berlin (1911).
26. HE 1, 1.
27. Socrates HE 1, 10; Soz. HE 1, 22; Chesnut *ibid* (n. 2) 197.
28. Schoo *ibid* (n. 25) 28-39.
29. HE 3, 3.
30. HE 3, 6.
31. HE 3, 11.
32. HE 3, 11.
33. HE 3, 12. See p. 257
34. HE 3, 13.
35. HE 1, 20, 25; 2, 27, 31; 6, 7, 21; Chesnut *ibid* (n. 2) 231.
36. HE 3, 19.
37. HE 3, 13.
38. Text in L. Parmentier, *Theodoret Kirchengeschichte* (2nd ed. by F. Scheidweiler) GCS, 44 Berlin (1954); A. Güldenpenning, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Theodoret von Kyrrhos*, Halle (1889); A. Harnack and A. C. McGiffert, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11 ed.); G. Bardy, 'Theodoret', *DTC* 15 Pt 1, Paris (1946) 299-325.
39. HE 1, 20; Chesnut *ibid* (n. 2) 202.
40. Socr. HE 6, 13.
41. Theodoret HE 2, 3.
42. HE 2, 4.
43. Theodoret here (HE 2, 4) follows Athanasius' account in *De Fuga* 3; cf. *Hist Arianorum* 7.
44. HE 2, 6.
45. Chapter 9.
46. HE 2, 6.
47. HE 2, 7.
48. HE 2, 9.
49. Note, too, that in his account of Julian's reign Sozomen clarifies the confusion of Socrates' account; G. W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*, London (1978) 26 with reference to Julian's youth.
50. *Ibid* (n. 49) chapter 21, 432. C. J. Hefele, *A History of the Councils* 2, Edinburgh (1876) 172-6 shows conclusively that the Council of Serdica cannot be regarded as an ecumenical Council as no later authorities regard it as such.

CHAPTER 13.

1. CSEL 65, 183.
2. Athanasius, **Hist. Arianorum** 20; Sozomen **HE** 3, 20; Socrates **HE** 2, 22 and Theodoret **HE** 2, 8. The latter states that Constans himself chose the two bishops.
3. Athanasius, **Hist. Arianorum** 18-19.
4. Athanasius, **Hist. Arianorum** 20; Theodoret **HE** 2, 8.
5. **Hist. Arianorum** 21.
6. Sozomen **HE** 3, 20; Socrates **HE** 2, 22; cf. also Theodoret **HE** 2, 8 who refers to the first letter as containing menaces, although as the plot of Stephen is mentioned he must be referring to a second letter of Constans; cf. Philostorgius **HE** 3, 12 and Lucifer Cagliari, **De S. Athanasio** 1 (CSEL 14, 116).
7. **Hist. Arianorum** 21.
8. Athanasius quoting Constantius' words in **Hist. Arianorum** 49. Allowance must however be made for Athanasius' attitude towards Constantius when he wrote **Hist. Arianorum** late in 358. In this work he tends to exalt Constans at the expense of his brother. See further Appendix B.
9. Athanasius, **De Synodis** 26; Socrates **HE** 2, 19.
10. Hilary, **B** 2, 5 (CSEL 65, 142).
11. The three letters are found in **Apol. c. Arianos** 51.
12. **Hist. Arianorum** 22; also in Epistle of Ossius to Constantius (**Hist. Arianorum** 44).
13. **Apol. c. Arianos** 54-6 gives the text of the letters.
14. **Apol. c. Arianos** 55.
15. **Apol. c. Arianos** 51 and 57; **Hist. Arianorum** 25; Socrates **HE** 2, 24; Sozomen **HE** 3, 21-2.
16. On this date **Hist. Acephalia** 1 (Turner, **Monumenta** 1, 2, 663); **Hist. Arianorum** 25 and 27 for Athanasius' welcome.
17. Years later Epiphanius says that once, when he enquired of Athanasius about Marcellus, he only smiled ironically over the unfortunate man (**Adv. Haer** 72, 4, 4).
18. **Apol. ad Constantium** 6-11 which is special pleading when he was in Constantius' power.
19. **Apol. ad Constantium** 23; **Hist. Arianorum** 24. Socrates' chronology in **HE** 2, 26-32 is confused through dating Serdica to 347.
20. Hilary, **c. Constantium** 2 (**PL** 10, 578); **de Synodis** 2; Sulpicius Severus, **Chronica** 2, 39, 7. On the Council of Béziers A. Wilmart, 'Les Fragments historiques et le synode de Béziers', **Rev. Ben.** 25 (1908) 225-9. Wilmart holds that the text of a discourse Hilary gave at this Council has been preserved in **Coll. AntiAriana** Paris B. 2, 5 (CSEL 65, 140-2).
21. A. J. P. Taylor, **The Origins of the Second World War**, London (1962) 216.
22. H. von Campenhausen, **The Fathers of the Greek Church**, London (1963) 73.
23. It is interesting that Athanasius mentions Origen very rarely, although occasionally he tried to defend him from Arian interpretations (Athanasius, **De Decr.** 27, 1; **ad Serap.** 4, 9 quoted by Von Campenhausen (*ibid.* n. 22) 72).
24. **Constantius II. Und die Christliche Kirche**, Darmstadt (1977) 46 ff.
25. **The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire** (ed. J. B. Bury) 2 London (1909) 384.

APPENDIX B

1. A. Momigliano, **The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century**, Oxford (1963) 88.
2. Constantine referred to the Christian God as **summa divinitas**, **summus deus**, **potentissimus deus** with no reference to Christ. The triumphal arch which the Senate dedicated to Constantine in 315 also shows an accommodation to pagan and Christian ideas. The Emperor seems to have visualised Christ as Sol, the sun god, and even after his conversion, he appears on coins as Sol comes, so enabling pagans to identify their own

- idea of god with that of the Christians. Even Constantine's donations to the Church had the same significance as State support for the traditional cults; A. Alföldi, **The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome**, Oxford (1948) 110 ff.; J. Straub 'Constantine as *κοινὸς ἐπίσκοπος*', **DOP** 21 (1967) 39-55.
3. Symmachus, **Relatio** 8 (PL 16, 968).
 4. K. F. Morrison, 'Rome and the City of God', **Transactions of the American Philosophical Society** 54 (1964) 27.
 5. A. H. M. Jones, **The Decline of the Ancient World**, London (1966) 58.
 6. **Hist. Arianorum** 54.
 7. Athanasius, **De dec. Nic. sym.** 3; **Apol. c. Arianos** 6; Socrates **HE** 1, 8.
 8. F. Dvornik, **Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy**, II, Washington (1966) 651.
 9. 'Two Notes on Athanasius', **OCP** 41 (1975) 344-52.
 10. **CHL** 30 3 (1963) 19-21.
 11. **Jews and Christians in Egypt**, London (1924); W. E. Crum, 'Some Further Meletian Documents', **JEA** 13 (1927) 19-26. Papyrus No. 1914 shows that Athanasius had caused distress by imprisoning one of the Meletian bishops in a meat market, a priest of the same district in the **applicium** and a deacon in the principal prison. In addition he is said to have procured the banishment of seven Meletian bishops. A. H. M. Jones *ibid* (n. 5) 45 refers to 'Athanasius' bullies'.
 12. **Apol. c. Arianos** 61.
 13. **HE** 2, 13.
 14. Athanasius, as late as 347, used former Meletians in appointing bishops.
 15. **HE** 2, 31.
 16. The real question at issue in Athanasius' first exile may have been Alexandrian jurisdiction rather than imperial interference in an episcopal deposition.
 17. **PL** 8. On the question of Constantine's religious legislation see M. A. Huttman, **The Establishment of Christianity and the Proscription of Paganism**, New York (1914) and H. Dörries, **Constantine the Great**, New York (1972) 51-67.
 18. For the letters and speeches N. H. Baynes, **Constantine the Great and the Christian Church**, Oxford (1972) 12 ff.; S. L. Greenslade, **Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius**, London (1954) 21-2.
 19. Eusebius, **Vita, Const.** 4, 24.
 20. **Laus Constantini** 2 (**PG** 20, 1325).
 21. References in Chapter 1 n. 12.
 22. *Ibid* (n. 8) chapters 10 and 12.
 23. **Epist. encycl. ad episcopos.** 5.
 24. **Apol. c. Arianos** 36, 54.
 25. **Apol. ad Constantium** 27.
 26. **Apol. ad Constantium** 5.
 27. **Apol. ad Constantium** 11.
 28. **Apol. ad Constantium** 24.
 29. **Apol. ad Constantium** 35.
 30. **Vita Antoni** 81; cf. Antony's vision of senseless beasts seizing the Church: 'These things the old man saw, and after two years the present inroad of the Arians and the plunder of the Churches took place.... Then we all understood these kicks of the mules signified to Antony what the Arians, senseless like beasts, are now doing'. This seems to refer to the troubles of 356 after which Athanasius fled to the desert where he was harboured by the monks. It was there that he wrote **Vita Antoni** and, in 358, his **Historia Arianorum**. In the latter he adopts a violent tone towards Constantius.
 31. **Hist. Arianorum** 15.
 32. **Hist. Arianorum** 30, 34, 45, 67, 68.
 33. **Hist. Arianorum** 44.
 34. **Hist. Arianorum** 33.
 35. **In ipsum Christum manus missae: c. Constantium** 11 (**PL** 10, 589)
 36. **Hist. Arianorum** 51-3
 37. The Eusebian and earlier Athanasian conception of the Emperor was not discarded everywhere. Optatus, a contemporary of Valentinian I and Valens, held the older view, as did Julius Firmicus Maternus and Flavius Vegetius Renatus. F. Dvornik *ibid* (n. 8) 628-30.

38. Athanasius was no doubt aware that Constantine never partook of the eucharist but was content with prayer and intercession. According to Eusebius, **Vita Const.** 4, 22, Constantine behaved *οσα τις μετοχος ιερω ουνειν* in his religious observance in his palace; i.e. he prayed and celebrated Church festivals as if he were a member of the Church and as if his palace were a Church of God.
39. A. H. M. Jones **ibid** (n. 5) 124 holds that 'the decline of toleration and religious liberty was in fact preached only by the defeated parties in ecclesiastical conflicts'. This is however to overlook the fact that Athanasius' primary objection to Constantius was not corruption of true belief but the transformation of the Church into a brand of the civil government which led to that corruption. This led Athanasius to emphasise the distinction between Church and State. This however was not a 'defeat' but followed inevitably from Athanasius' conception of the Church.
40. K. F. Hagel, **Kirche und Kaisertum in Lehre und Leben des Athanasius**, Leipzig (1933) 65 ff. appears to over-emphasise Athanasius' dualism.

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Map of the dioceses of Dacia, Thracia, Macedonia, Illyricum and adjoining dioceses showing the
sees of bishops present at the Council of Serdica

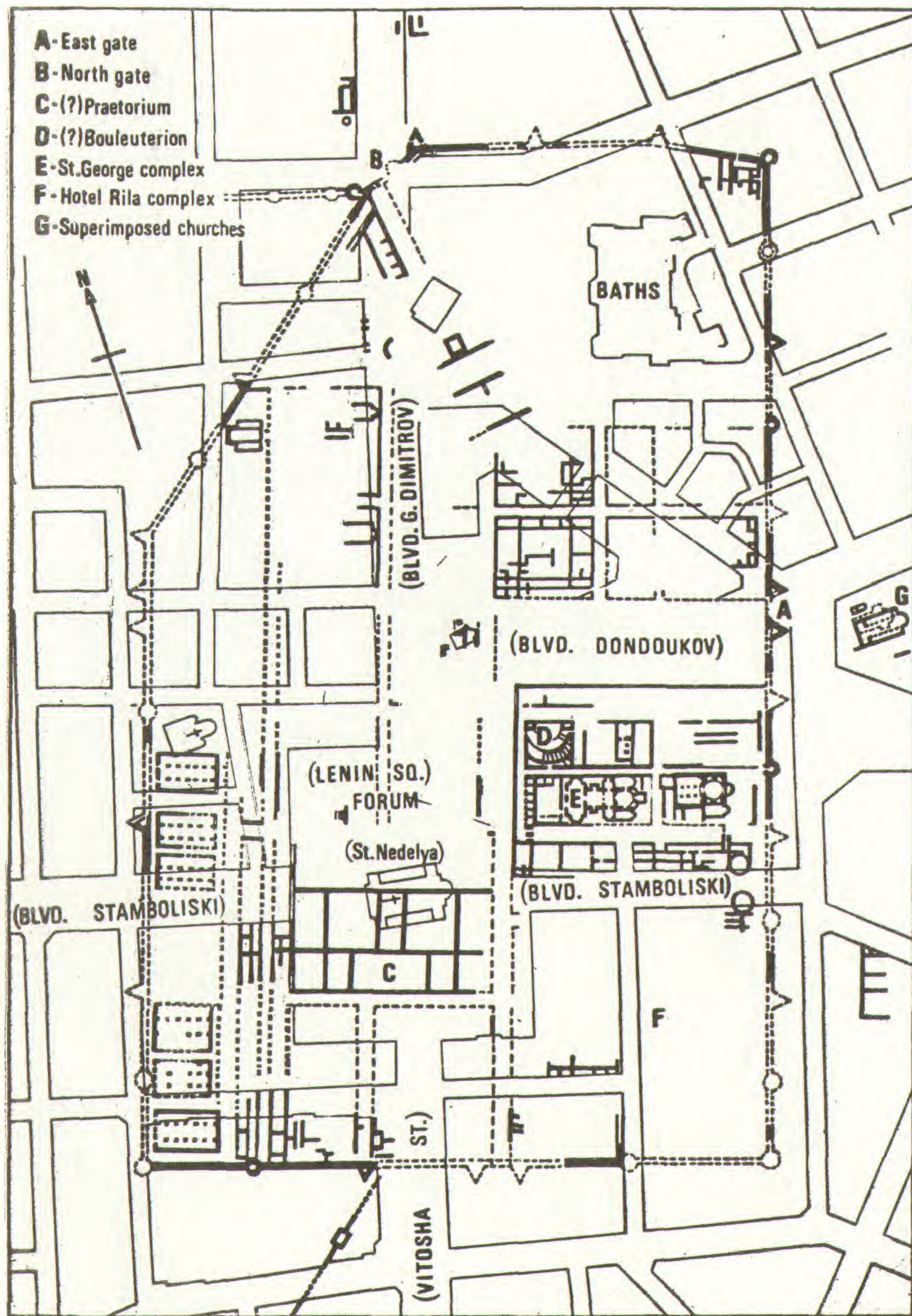


Figure 1. City Plan of Serdica in Late-Roman times

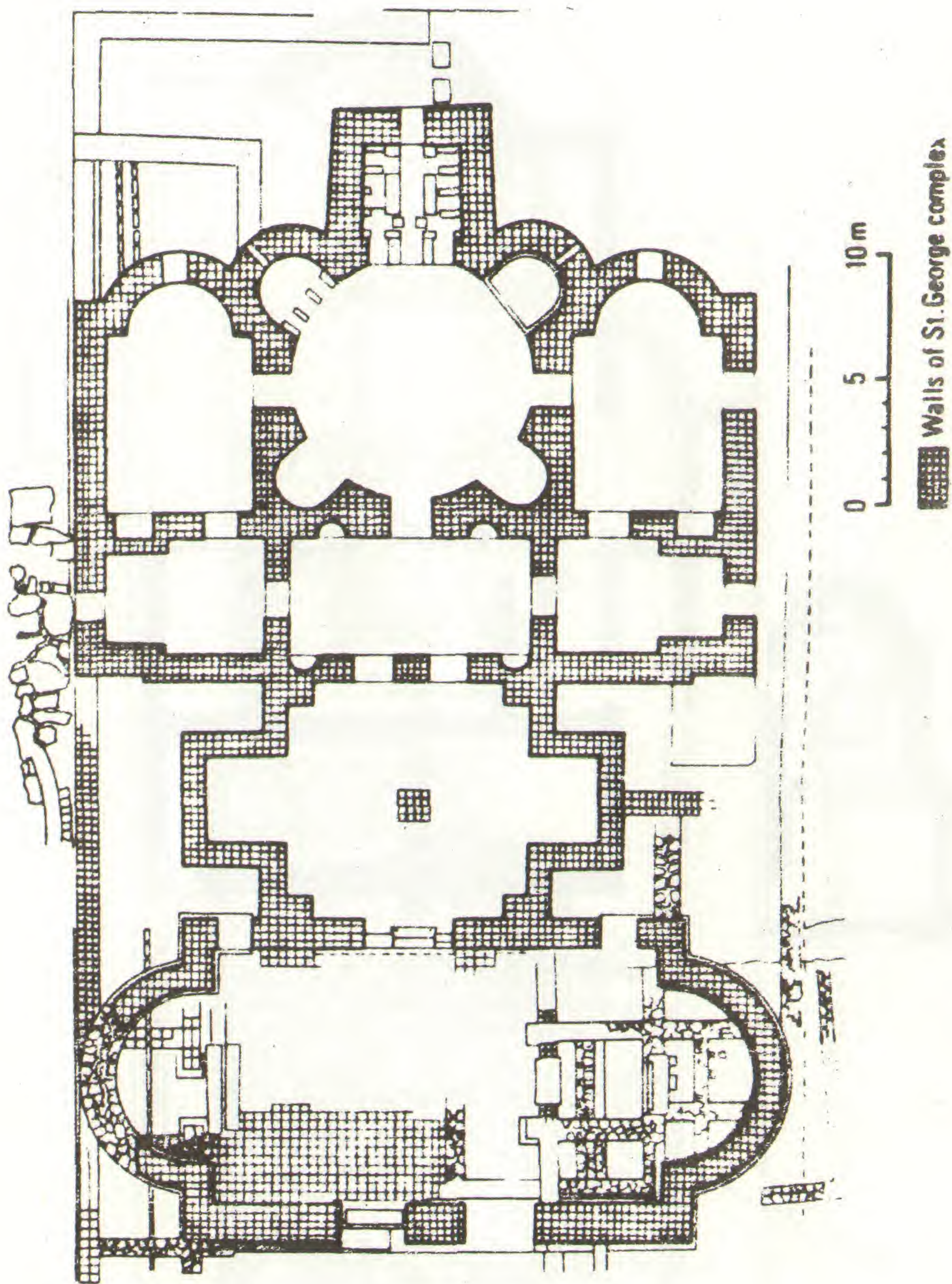


Figure 2. 'St George' Complex

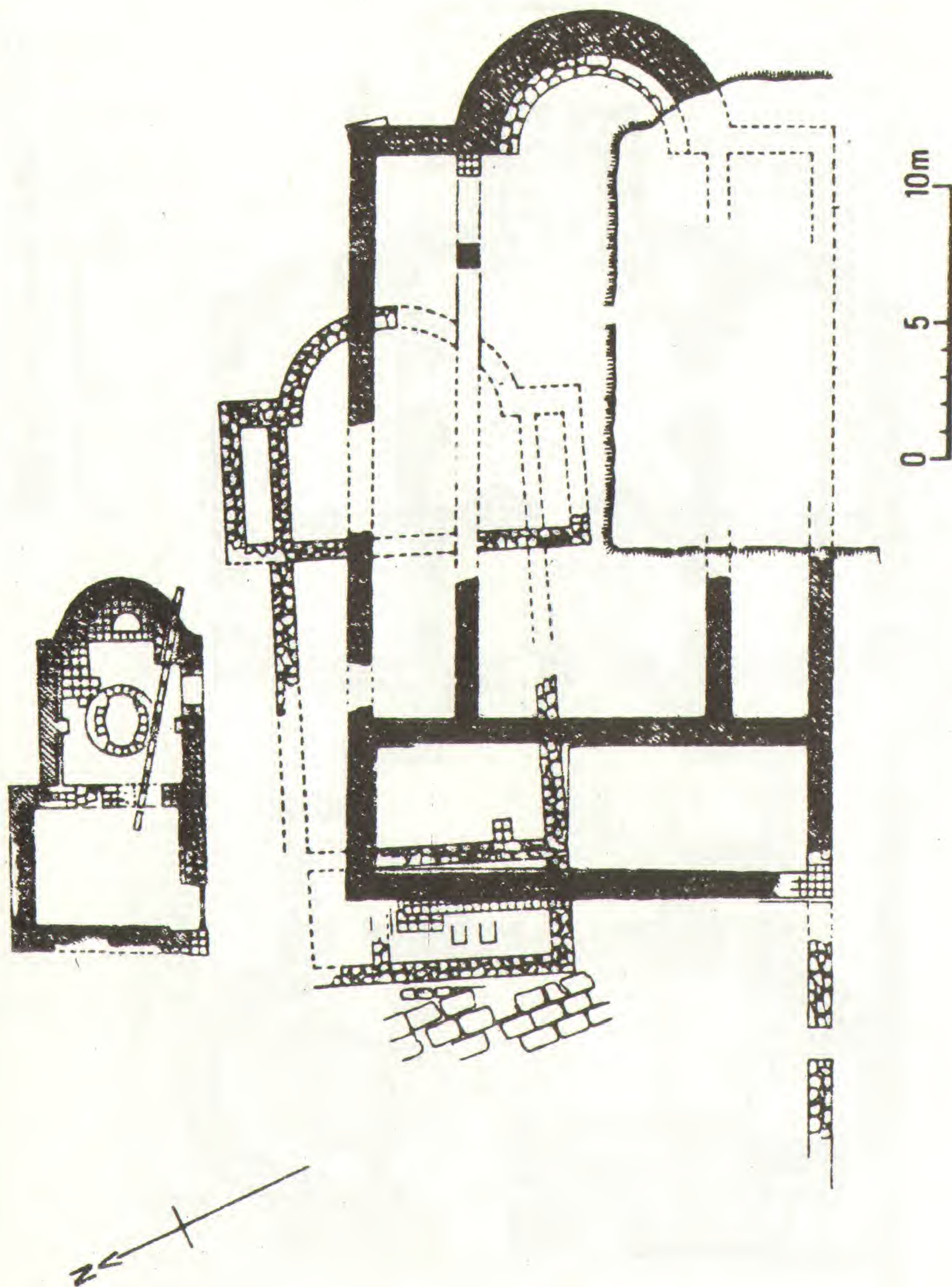


Figure 3. Superimposed Churches outside the east gate dating from the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.

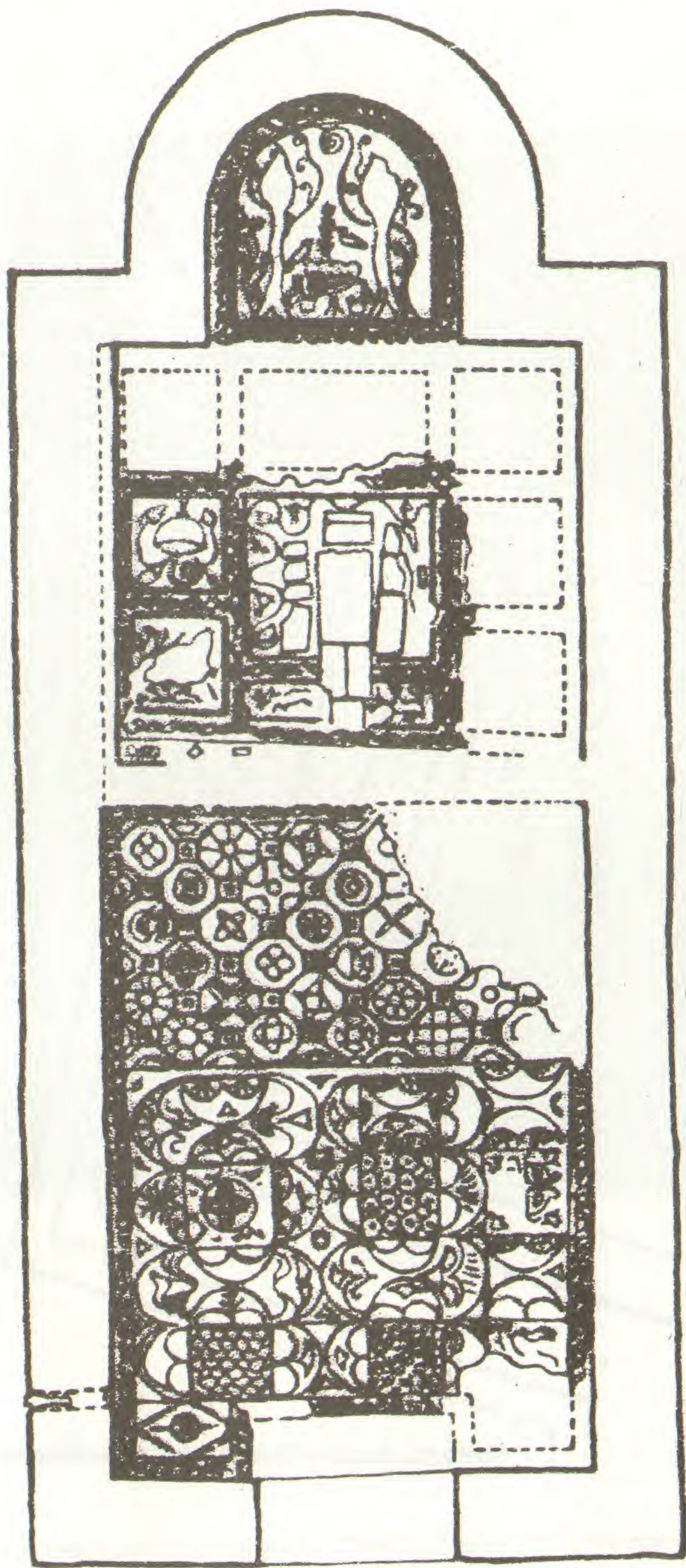


Figure 4. Serdica: S. Sophia. The earliest Church of the fourth century A.D.

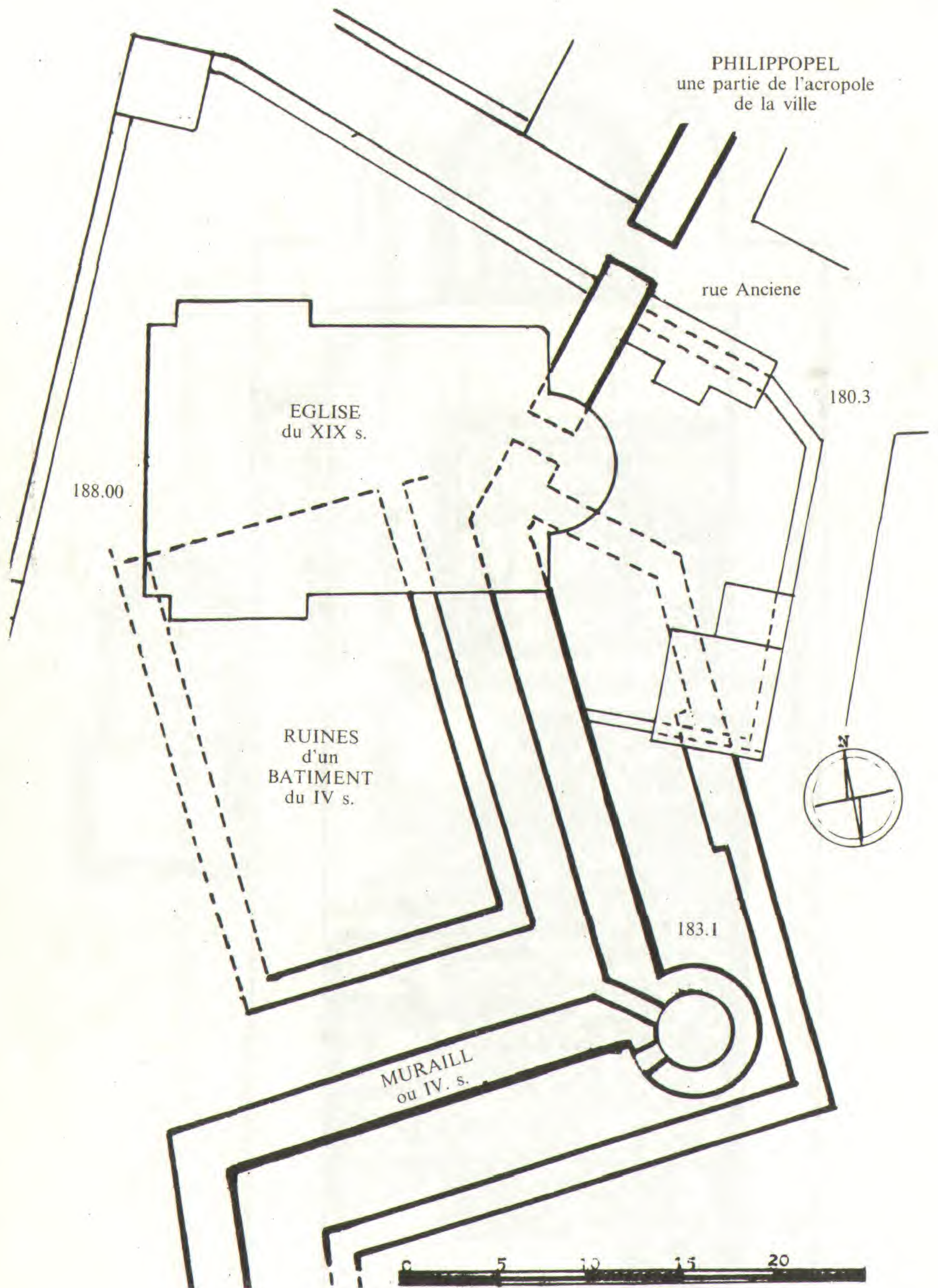


Figure 5. Philippopolis: The fourth century complex on the acropolis

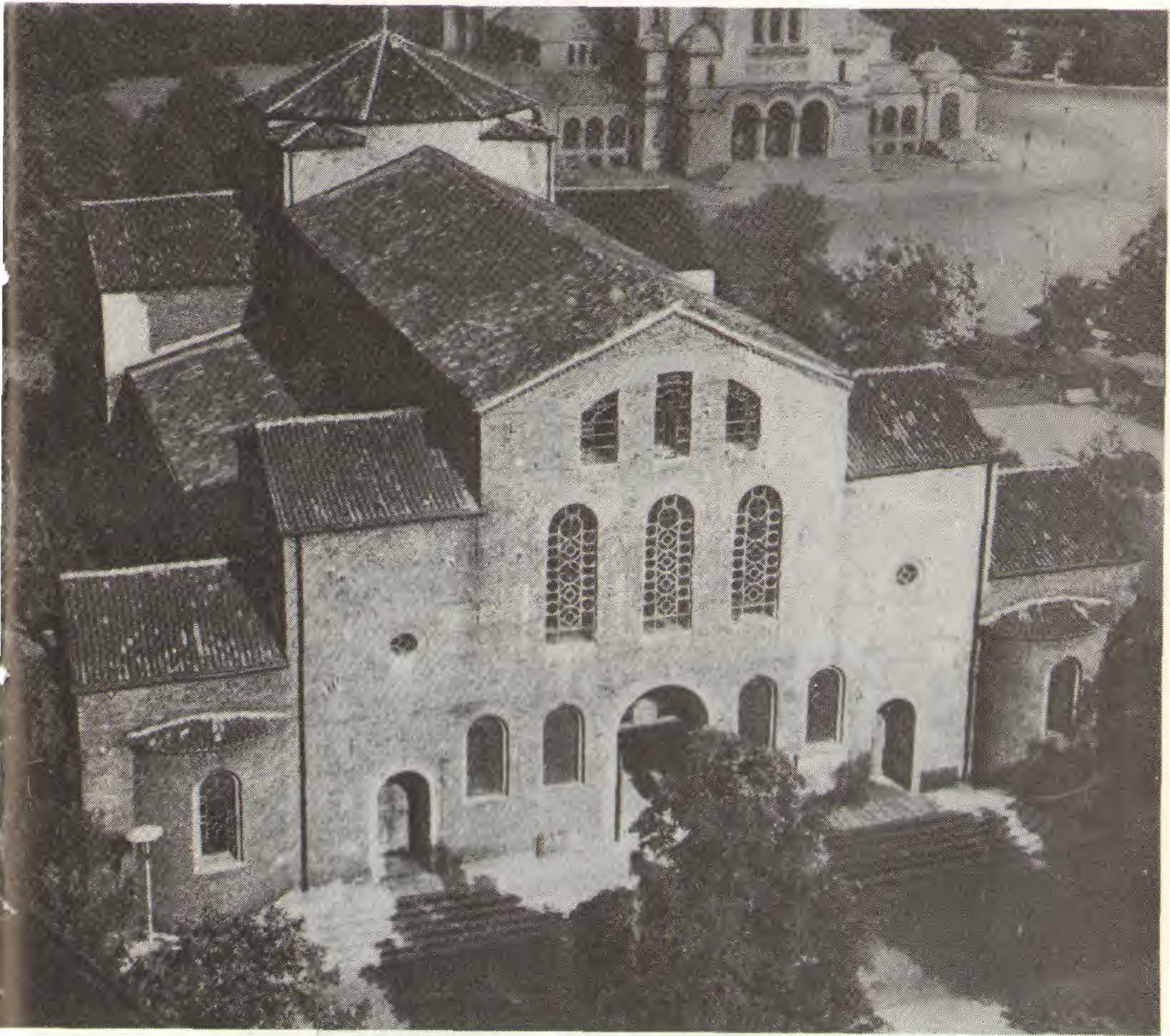


Plate A. View of the Church of S. Sophia from the north-west (sixth century A.D.)



Plate B. Remains of the Civil Building on the site of the 'St. George' Complex



Roman Gold Medallion. Constantine the Great, 306—337 A.D.



Roman Gold Medallion. Constantius II, 323—361 A.D.

Plate C. Coins of the Emperors Constantine, Constantine II and Constantius II



Constantine II enthroned between his two brothers. Silver Medallion struck just before his death in 340 A.D.



Gold Medallion of Constantine II struck at Antioch in 343—4 A.D. The Emperor is represented in a triumphal chariot and is being crowned by two winged victories.



Plate D A Cameo fragment showing the sons of Constantine (now in Cologne)



Bust of Constantius II

Plate D

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